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THE WISDOM OF THE EAST SERIES

EDITED by J. L. CRANMER-BYNG, M.C.

THE MYSTERIES OF SELFLESSNESS



The Mysteries of Selflessness

A Philosophical Poem

By the late
SIR MUHAMMAD IQBAL

Translated, with Introduction and Notes

by
ARTHUR J. ARBERRY



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EDITORIAL NOTE

THE object of the Editor of this series is a very definite one. He desires above all things that these books shall be the ambassadors of good-will between East and West. He hopes that they will contribute to a fuller knowledge of the great cultural heritage of the East, for only through real understanding will the West be able to appreciate the underlying problems and aspirations of Asia today. He is confident that a deeper knowledge of the great ideals and lofty philosophy of Eastern thought will help to a revival of that true spirit of charity which neither despises nor fears the nations of another creed and colour.

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PREFACE

THE historian of the future, when reviewing the great events of our times, will doubtless count among their most remarkable the sudden and surprising emergence, shortly after the second world-war, of an independent nation of nearly one hundred million souls, whose principal claim to nationhood was the religion professed by the great majority of its citizens. We still stand too near to the birth of Pakistan to be able fully to appreciate the significance of that dramatic, that heroic solution of the Indian Problem, as it had occupied the minds of our fathers and grandfathers ; but even the most indifferent reader of the newspapers must by now have begun to grasp something of the impact of Pakistan's creation upon the main tendencies of world-politics. Pakistan's spokesmen in the debates of the United Nations have attracted so much attention and respect, whether in their Kashmir arguments or in their championship of Moroccan or Tunisian aspirations, that it would be a singularly dull-witted observer of the international scene who would still fail to realize that this new country is destined to play a very leading part in the coming drama of world-history.

When the future historian proposes to analyse the causes that determined and conditioned the emergence of Pakistan, he will be bound to take into account the personality and writings of a man who is regarded by some as the creator, and by many as the principal, or a principal, advocate of the creation, of that great power. Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1876-1938), described by Wilfred Cantwell Smith in his impressive *Modern Islām in India* (Gollancz, 1946) as "the outstanding Muslim poet and

thinker of the century", whose greatness "may be measured in terms of the universal attention and veneration which he has attracted", died indeed before he could see the unexpectedly early realization of his dream of an independent nation for India's Muslim provinces; his last years of mental and physical anguish were not relieved by the consolation of knowing that the cause for which he strove so long was so soon to triumph. But a spate of publications, issued in Pakistan hard upon the heels of its independence, hailed him as the spiritual founder of the richest and most numerous Muslim country in the world, and the emphasis of this testimony has not diminished with the intervening years.

Iqbal was a poet as well as a philosopher, and he preferred to express his philosophy in poetry rather than in prose; which is presumably the main reason why he is still so comparatively unknown and misappreciated in the West. For whereas his few prose writings are chiefly in English, his poetry is in Urdu and Persian, and abounds in the conventional imagery of those literatures; so that even when translated into English it is apt to be felt as somewhat remote and unfamiliar. Moreover, not only is his style highly idiomatic, but his thought is not infrequently complex, and almost too subtle for the language in which he chose to express it; while the exuberance of his poetic fancy baffles the reader not alert to its rapid transitions and not aware of the conceptual unity underlying the rhetorical diversity. I know of no Oriental poet who confronts the translator with problems so various and so stubborn.

The greatness of Iqbal first became apparent when he published his *Asrar-i Khudi*, a Persian philosophical epic which the late R. A. Nicholson translated under the title *The Secrets of the Self* (Macmillan, 1920). In that poem he developed the first part of his theory of the individual in society. "The

kingdom of God on earth", he wrote to Nicholson, "means the democracy of more or less unique individuals, presided over by the most unique individual possible on this earth." Selfhood, or individuality, is the chief theme of the *Asrar*; "the moral and religious ideal of man is not self-negation but self-affirmation, and he attains to this ideal by becoming more and more individual, more and more unique". He aims to show that it is only in an ideal Islamic society, as he understands the matter, that the individual can hope to achieve complete self-affirmation.

The second half of this theory is presented in the *Rumuz-i Bekhudi*, which I have now translated as *The Mysteries of Selflessness*. It is obvious that the Iqbalian conception of selfhood, if developed in isolation from society, ends in unmitigated egoism and anarchy. But he was not interested merely in the individual and his self-realization; he was equally concerned with the evolution of an ideal society, or community as he preferred to call it. It is only as a member of this community that the individual, by the twin principles of conflict and concord, is able to express himself fully and ideally; it is only as an association of self-affirming individuals that the community can come into being and perfect itself. Iqbal thus escapes from libertarianism by limiting the individual's freedom, making him a member of a homogeneous community, and from totalitarianism by limiting the community's authority, making it a challenge and not an insurmountable obstacle to the individual's self-realization.

Such, in very brief and very simple, are the fundamental ideas worked out in these two poems. The ideas themselves are of course not particularly new; not particularly new either is the proposition that Islam is the ideal society; what is new, and what justifies Iqbal's pretension to be a leader of thought, is

the application of this philosophical theory of individuality and community to the religio-political dogma that Islam is superior to all other creeds and systems. The propaganda for Islamic unity in modern times has been continuous from the days of Jamal al-Din Afghani (1839-97) ; Iqbal was one of the latest, albeit one of the ablest and most influential of its publicists. He supplied a more or less respectable intellectual basis for a movement which is in reality more emotional than rational.

In the *Rumuz*, Iqbal states the case for international Islam. In this phase of his life he was still thinking most intently of the possibility of a revived caliphate, bringing together in a single theocracy the 300,000,000 Muslims of the world. The subsequent collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the extinction of the caliphate, the secularization of Turkey, and the creation of several independent or semi-independent Arab states caused him to modify his optimistic appreciation of the scene. "For the present," he wrote in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (O.U.P., 1934), "every Moslem nation must sink into her own deeper self, temporarily focus her vision on herself alone, until all are strong and powerful to form a living family of republics. A true and living unity, according to the nationalist thinkers, is not so easy as to be achieved by a merely symbolical overlordship. It is truly manifested in a multiplicity of free independent units whose racial rivalries are adjusted and harmonized by the unifying bond of a common spiritual aspiration. It seems to me that God is slowly bringing home to us the truth that Islam is neither Nationalism nor Imperialism but a League of Nations which recognizes artificial boundaries and racial distinctions for facility of reference only, and not for restricting the social horizon of its members." This was the mood in which Iqbal agitated for the secession of Islam from India and

the creation of Pakistan. The date of the millennium has been postponed ; but in the meanwhile there is important work to be done.

The events of 26 January 1952, Cairo's "Black Saturday", brought home to many, who were hitherto content to minimize the conflict between Islam and the West, that a situation existed fraught with the most serious danger. It is strange that the portents should have been so comfortably disregarded. The warning signals have been flying for a long time. When Iqbal wrote, "Believe me, Europe to-day is the greatest hindrance in the way of man's ethical advancement", he was not saying anything that he had not said before, and he was not seeking merely to provoke and shock ; neither was he a solitary voice crying in the wilderness. The present threats to the peace and security of the world are certainly not few ; among those threats there are not many greater than the revival lately of that spirit of irreconcilable hostility which found its most dramatic and bloody expression in the Crusades.

Over-simplification of complex issues is a most mischievous evil, perhaps the besetting sin of the twentieth century. A world accustomed to promote adult education through the popular press rather than by serious literature has become so conditioned to headlines, that it seems no longer possible for an intellectually honest, and therefore hesitant, evaluation of any problem to attract wide notice. For a professing philosopher Iqbal was remarkably ready to dogmatize in the modern fashion. "The idealism of Europe", he writes, "never became a living factor in her life, and the result is a perverted ego seeking itself through mutually intolerant democracies whose sole function is to exploit the poor in the interest of the rich." This is the kind of utterance which explains why communists find no difficulty in claiming

Iqbal as one of their own. It is of course as necessary for an Oriental politician as for his Occidental fellow to paint the world in two colours, black and white ; but when a politician poses and is accepted as a prophet, it is irresponsible of him to continue to indulge in the puerilities of the soap-box, unless he is ambitious, like a Hitler, to stage a fantastic *Götterdämmerung*.

Present-day Oriental contempt for Europe, to my way of thinking the most terrible and menacing aspect of contemporary politics, is not to be dismissed simply as a triumphant reaction against a defeated or a penitent imperialism. Doubtless there is much of that in it ; but the roots go deeper. It is not to be attributed solely to the egregious activities of those little intellectuals, who in the twenties and the thirties went about the world loudly proclaiming the imminent collapse of European civilization, fouling the nest they fancied they had outgrown ; though the seeds which they so lightheadedly scattered are yielding a sufficiently rank harvest. It is not even to any exceptional extent a recoil of horror from the genocide of the great wars ; yet that makes for a fair enough show of self-righteousness. All these factors are present and active ; but underneath them all lies the challenge flung down more than thirteen centuries ago in the deserts of Arabia, and taken up again and again by Iqbal and all his predecessors and successors. Islam claims specifically to be the final revelation of God to mankind, and an overthrow of all other religions.

Europe for centuries was unfair to Islam, in the sense that the positive achievements of Muslim civilization were overlooked, scholarship being the handmaid of religious partisanship. Against this injustice Amir Ali and his school rightly protested ; and since polemics had been Europe's chosen weapon, Europe had no reason to complain if Islam proved equal to wield that arm with skill and enthusiasm. The liberal move-

ment of last century made possible a more realistic assessment of Islam's contribution to humanity ; European scholars, long before Amir Ali was born, now delighted to discover and advertise the advancements in mathematics, medicine and science, the manifestations in art, literature, law, philosophy and politics, for which Islam could, by a generous over-simplification, be held responsible. It became fashionable to acknowledge legacies ; and the inheritance of Europe from mediaeval Islam was duly admitted.

Swooping eagerly upon this learned testimony by impartial observers to their past greatness, Muslim apologists presently began to allege, with more and more assurance and stridency, that what was good in modern European culture was due to Islam, and what was evil was due to other forces. One Indian writer, F. K. Durrani, went so far as to declare that " all progress in learning, culture and civilization from the seventh century to the present times owes itself directly or indirectly to the mind of the Founder of Islam ". In a scarcely less ebullient mood Iqbal wrote, " Believe me, Europe to-day is the greatest hindrance in the way of man's ethical achievement. The Muslim, on the other hand, is in possession of these ultimate ideas on the basis of a revelation, which, speaking from the inmost depths of life, internalizes its own apparent externality. With him the spiritual basis of life is a matter of conviction for which even the least enlightened man among us can easily lay down his life ; and in view of the basic idea of Islam that there can be no further revelation binding on man, we ought to be spiritually one of the most emancipated peoples on earth . . . Let the Muslim to-day appreciate his position, reconstruct his social life in the light of ultimate principles, and evolve, out of the hitherto partially revealed purpose of Islam, that spiritual democracy which is the ultimate aim of Islam."

The tables have indeed been turned. Christian Europe, adventuring into the East upon its self-appointed civilizing mission, is now informed that it is itself in need of civilizing anew from the East.

How serious is all this? It is easy, sitting in a comfortable chair in London or Paris or New York, to deny the whole argument half-amusedly as a battle of words. That is a dangerous delusion, as any observant traveller in the Islamic world to-day will readily testify. Quite apart from the blood and fire of Cairo's Black Saturday, which those who wish may, if they choose, interpret as an exasperated reaction against British imperialism, or an attempted communist uprising, or the age-old lawlessness of an Oriental mob, it is impossible to live intelligently for a single day in any part of that large stretch of the earth's surface extending from Morocco to Indonesia, without becoming uncomfortably aware that Islam and Europe stand poised against each other, and that the choice between peace and war may not be far off. Whether we like it or not, be we Europeans or Africans or Asians, we live in dangerous times, and may well be heading for the greatest collision since Richard fought Saladin. Are we justified in pretending that the facts are otherwise?

If the threatening and so unnecessary conflict is to be avoided, it is imperative that we should make a renewed and unremitting effort to understand each other's viewpoint, and to study what possibilities exist for, first, a diminishing of tension, next, a rational compromise, and, ultimately, an agreement to work together towards common ideals. In translating the *Rumuz-i Bekhudi* I have endeavoured to interpret the Muslim case, as expressed with forceful eloquence by a remarkable thinker and a remarkable poet. For my own part, as a Christian not

interested to persuade any Muslim to share my ancestral faith, I believe that the present discord between Christianity and Islam, if it cannot be resolved, can at least be so sensibly modified as to be removed from the perilous arena of emotion to the more tranquil debate of reason. In that debate it will become apparent that the area of agreement between the two faiths is very much larger than the area of disagreement, generating the reasonable hope that opposition may in time give way to co-operation. More especially is this likely to happen, if Christians and Muslims realize soon enough, and clearly enough, that they are confronted by a common enemy able to destroy them together, unless they resist him together.

“I am not sure that I have always grasped the meaning or rendered it correctly,” Nicholson wrote in his translation of the *Asrar*; and I have seen a copy of that book, marginally corrected by Iqbal himself, which bears striking witness to the difficulties so fine a scholar of Persian as Nicholson found in elucidating the obscurities of Iqbal's style. I can only repeat his remarks on my own account here; and must add that my translation, such as it is, would have been even more unsatisfactory, had it not been my good fortune to have it revised by eminent Pakistani scholars, members of the Iqbal Academy, who were personal friends of Iqbal, and are therefore far more familiar than I can hope to be with his ideas and modes of expression. I am glad to take this opportunity of expressing to them my cordial thanks. In casting the translation in the form of unrhymed verse—the original is written in rhyming couplets—I have tried, while seeking strict fidelity to the meaning, to convey something of the poetical flavour of the Persian model.

DEDICATION TO THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

You, who were made by God to be the Seal¹
Of all the peoples dwelling upon earth,
That all beginnings might in you find end;
Whose saints were prophetlike, whose wounded hearts
Wove into unity the souls of men;
Why are you fallen now so far astray
From Mecca's holy Kaaba, all bemused
By the strange beauty of the Christian's way?
The very skies are but a gathering
Of your street's dust, yourselves the cynosure
Of all men's eyes; whither in restless haste
Do you now hurry like a storm-tossed wave,
What new diversion seeking? No, but learn
The mystery of ardour from the moth
And make your lodgement in the burning flame;
Lay Love's foundation-stone in your own soul,
And to the Prophet pledge anew your troth.
My mind was weary of Christian company,
When suddenly your beauty stood unveiled.
My fellow-minstrel sang the epiphany²
Of alien loveliness, the lovelorn theme
Of tresses and soft cheeks, and rubbed his brow
Against the saki's door, rehearsed the chant
Of Magian wenches. I would martyr be
To your brow's scimitar, am fain to rest

¹ Numbers at end of certain lines refer to notes on pp. 87 to 92.

Like dust upon your street. Too proud am I
To mouth base panegyrics, or to bow
My stubborn head to every tyrant's court.
Trained up to fashion mirrors out of words,
I need not Alexander's magic glass.³
My neck endures not men's munificence ;
Where roses bloom, I gather close the skirt
Of my soul's bud. Hard as the dagger's steel
I labour in this life, my lustre win
From the tough granite. Though I am a sea,
Not restless is my billow ; in my hand
I hold no whirlpool bowl. A painted veil
Am I, no blossom's perfume-scattering,
No prey to every billowing breeze that blows.
I am a glowing coal within Life's fire,
And wrap me in my embers for a cloak.
And now my soul comes suppliant to your door
Bringing a gift of ardour passionate.
A mighty water out of heaven's deep
Momently trickles o'er my burning breast,
The which I channel narrower than a brook
That I may fling it in your garden's dish.
Because you are beloved by him I love
I fold you to me closely as my heart.
Since Love first made the breast an instrument
Of fierce lamenting, by its flame my heart
Was molten to a mirror ; like a rose
I pluck my breast apart, that I may hang
This mirror in your sight. Gaze you therein
On your own beauty, and you shall become
A captive fettered in your tresses' chain.
I chant again the tale of long ago,

To bid your bosom's old wounds bleed anew.

So for a people no more intimate
With its own soul I supplicated God,
That He might grant to them a firm-knit life.
In the mid watch of night, when all the world
Was hushed in slumber, I made loud lament ;
My spirit robbed of patience and repose,
Unto the Living and Omnipotent God
I made my litany ; my yearning heart
Surged, till its blood streamed from my weeping eyes.
"How long, O Lord, how long the tulip-glow,
The begging of cool dewdrops from the dawn ?
Lo, like a candle wrestling with the night
O'er my own self I pour my flooding tears."
I spent my self, that there might be more light,
More loveliness, more joy for other men.
Not for one moment takes my ardent breast
Repose from burning ; Friday does not shame⁴
My restless week of unremitting toil.
Wasted is now my spirit's envelope ;
My glowing sigh is sullied all with dust.
When God created me at Time's first dawn
A lamentation quivered on the strings
Of my melodious lute, and in that note
Love's secrets stood revealed, the ransom-price
Of the long sadness of the tale of Love ;
Which music even to sapless straw imparts
The ardency of fire, and on dull clay
Bestows the daring of the reckless moth.
Love, like the tulip, has one brand at heart,
And on its bosom wears a single rose ;
And so my solitary rose I pin

Upon your turban, and cry havoc loud
Against your drunken slumber, hoping yet
Tulips may blossom from your earth anew
Breathing the fragrance of the breeze of Spring.

PRELUDE

Of the Bond between Individual and Community

THE link that binds the Individual
To the Society a Mercy is ;
His truest Self in the Community
Alone achieves fulfilment. Wherefore be
So far as in thee lies in close rapport
With thy Society, and lustre bring
To the wide intercourse of free-born men.
Keep for thy talisman these words he spoke
That was the best of mortals : " Satan holds ⁶
His furthest distance where men congregate."
The Individual a Mirror holds
To the Community, and they to him ;
He is a jewel threaded on their cord,
A star that in their constellation shines ;
He wins respect as being one of them,
And the Society is organized
As by comprising many such as he.
When in the Congregation he is lost
'Tis like a drop which, seeking to expand,
Becomes an ocean. It is strong and rich
In ancient ways, a mirror to the Past
As to the Future, and the link between
What is to come, and what has gone before,
So that its moments are as infinite
As is Eternity. The joy of growth
Swells in his heart from the Community,

That watches and controls his every deed ;
To them he owes his body and his soul,
Alike his outward and his hidden parts.
His thoughts are vocal on the People's tongue,
And on the pathway that his forebears laid
He learns to run. His immaturity
Is warmed to ripeness by their friendship's flame,
Till he becomes one with the Commonwealth.
His singleness in multiplicity
Is firm and stable, and itself supplies
A unity to their innumerate swarm.
The word that sits outside its proper verse *
Shatters the jewel of the thought concealed
Within its pocket ; when the verdant leaf
Falls from the stem, its thread of hope for Spring
Is snapped asunder. He who has not drunk
The water of the People's sacred well,⁷
The flames of minstrelsy within his lute
Grow cold, and die. The Individual,
Alone, is heedless of high purposes ;
His strength is apt to dissipate itself ;
The People only make him intimate
With discipline, teach him to be as soft
And tractable as is the gentle breeze,
Set him in earth like a well-rooted oak,
Close-fetter him, to make him truly free.
When he is prisoner to the chain of Law
His deer, by nature wild and uncontrolled,⁸
Yields in captivity the precious musk.
Thou, who hast not known Self from Selflessness,
Therefore hast lost thyself in vain surmise.
Within thy dust there is an element

Of Light, whose single shaft illuminates
Thy whole perception ; all thy joy derives
From its enjoyment, all thy sorrow springs
From its distress ; its constant change and turn
Keep thee in vital being. It is one
And, being one, brooks no duality ;
Grace to its glow I am myself, thou thou.
Preserving self, staking and making self,
Nourishing pride in meek humility,
It is a flame that sets a fire alight,
A spark that overshoots the blazing torch.
Its nature is to be both free and bond ;
Itself a part, it has the potency
To seize the whole. I have beheld its wont
Is strife incessant, and have called its name
Selfhood, and Life. Whenever it comes forth
From its seclusion, and discreetly steps
Into the riot of phenomena
Its heart is impressed with the stamp of " he ",
" I " is dissolved, converting into " thou ".
Compulsion cuts the freedom of its choice,
Making it rich in love. While pride of self
Pulls its own way, humility is not born ;
Pull pride together, and humility
Comes into being. Self negates itself
In the Community, that it may be
No more a petal, but a rosary.
" These subtleties are like a steely sword :
If they defeat thy wit, quick, flee away ! "

*That the Community is made up of the Mingling of
Individuals, and owes the Perfecting of its Education
to Prophethood*

Upon what manner man is bound to man :
That tale's a thread, the end whereof is lost
Beyond unravelling. We can descry
The Individual within the Mass,
And we can pluck him as a flower is plucked
Out of the garden. All his nature is
Entranced with individuality,
Yet only in Society he finds
Security and preservation. On
The road of life, the furnace of life's fire,
That roaring battlefield, sets him aflame.
Men grow habituated each to each,
Like jewels threaded on a single cord ;
Succour each other in the war of life
In mutual bond, like workmen bent upon
A common task. Through such polarity
The constellations congregate, each star
In several attraction keeping each
Poised firmly and unshaken. Caravans
May pitch their tents on mountain or on hill,
Broad meadow, fringe of desert, sandy mound.
Yet slack and lifeless hangs the warp and woof
Of the Group's labour, unresolved the bud
Of its deep meditation, still unplayed
The flickering levin of its instrument,
Its music hushed within its muted strings,
Unsmitten by the pounding of the quest,

The plectrum of desire ; disordered still
Its new-born concourse, and so thin its wine
As to be blotted up with cotton flock ;
New-sprung the verdure of its soil, and cold
The blood in its vine's veins ; a habitat
Of demons and of fairy sprites its thoughts,
So that it leaps in terror from the shapes
Conjured by its own surmise ; shrunk the scope
Of its crude life, its narrow thoughts confined
Beneath the rim of its constricting roof ;
Fear for its life the meagre stock-in-trade
Of its constituent elements ; its heart
Trembling before the whistle of the wind ;
Its spirit shies away from arduous toil,
Little disposed to pluck at Nature's skirt,
But whatsoever springs of its own self
Or falls from heaven, that it gathers up.
Till God discovers a man pure of heart
In His good time, who in a single word
A volume shall rehearse ; a minstrel he
Whose piercing music gives new life to dust.
Through him the unsubstantial atom glows
Radiant with life, the meanest merchandise
Takes on new worth. Out of his single breath
Two hundred bodies quicken ; with one glass
He livens an assembly. His bright glance
Slays, but forthwith his single uttered word
Bestows new life, that so Duality
Expiring, Unity may come to birth.
His thread, whose end is knotted to the skies,
Weaves all together life's dissevered parts.
Revealing a new vista to the gaze,

He can convert broad desert and bare vale
Into a garden. At his fiery breath
A people leap like rue upon a fire
In sudden tumult, in their heart one spark
Caught from his kindling, and their sullen clay
Breaks instantly aflame. Where'er he treads
The earth receiving vision, every mote¹⁰
May wink the eye at Moses' Sinai.
The naked understanding he adorns,
With wealth abundant fills its indigence,
Fans with his skirts its embers, purifies
Its gold of every particle of dross.
He strikes the shackles from the fettered slave,
Redeems him from his masters, and declares,
"No other's slave thou art, nor any less
Than those mute idols." So unto one goal
Drawing each on, he circumscribes the feet
Of all within the circle of one Law,
Reschools them in God's wondrous Unity,
And teaches them the habit and the use
Of self-surrender to the Will Divine.

THE PILLARS OF ISLAM

First Pillar : The Unity of God

THE Mind, astray in this determinate world,
First found the pathway to its distant goal
By faith in God the One ; what other home
Should bring the hapless wanderer to rest ?
Upon what other shore should Reason's barque
Touch haven ? All men intimate with truth
The secret of the Godhead have by heart,
Which is implicit in the sacred words ¹¹
He comes unto the Merciful, a slave.
In action let faith's potency be tried,
That it may guide thee to thy secret powers :
From it derive religion, wisdom, law,
Unfailing vigour, power, authority.
Its splendour doth amaze the learned mind,
But giveth unto lovers force to act ;
The lowly in its shadow reacheth high,
And worthless earth becomes like alchemy
Precious beyond compute. Its mighty force
Chooseth the slave, whereof it doth create
Another species ; sprightlier he treads
Upon the path of truth, and in his veins
The blood burns hotter than the lightning's shaft.
Fear dies, and doubt ; toil is new vitalized ;
The vision sees the inner mystery
Of all creation. When in servanthood
To God man's foot is stablished, beggary's bowl

Becomes the magic cup that Jamshid bore.¹²

There is no god but God: this is the soul¹³
And body of our pure Community,
The pitch that keeps our instrument in tune,
The very substance of our mysteries,
The knotted thread that binds our scattered thoughts.
And when these words, being uttered on the lips,
Reach to the heart, they do augment the power
Of life itself; graven upon the rock,
They wake a heart therein; but if the heart
Burns not with the remembrance of that faith
It doth convert to clay. When we inflamed
The hearts within us with the passionate glow
Of this belief, we set ablaze the barn
Of all contingency with but a sigh.
This is the lustre glittering in the hearts
Of men, those steely mirrors liquefied
By Faith's consuming flame, whose torch is like
A tulip in our veins, and so we bear
No other mark of glory but its brand.
Through this true Faith black man becomes as red,
Kinsman to Omar, aye, and Abu Dharr.¹⁴
The heart's a lodge to Self and the Not-self,
And passion quickens when the cup is shared;
When several hearts put on a single hue
That is Community, which Sinai
Grows radiant in one epiphany.
Peoples must have one thought, and in their minds
Pursue a single purpose; to one draw
Their temperaments respond, one testing-stone
Discriminates their hideous from their fair.
Unless the instrument of thought possess

The fire of truth, it is impossible
Its range can be so wide. We Muslims are,
Children of Abraham, which fact is proved
(If proof thou seekest) by *Your father he*.¹⁸
Though nations' destinies their lands control,
Though nations build their edifice on race,
Thinkest thou the Community is based
Upon the Country? Shall so much regard
Be blindly paid to water, air and earth?
It is dull ignorance to put one's boast
In lineage; that judgment rests upon
The body, and the body perishes.
Other are the foundations that support
Islam's Community; they lie concealed
Within our hearts. We, who are present now,
Have bound our hearts to Him who is unseen,
And therefore are delivered from the chains
Of earthly things. The cord that links this folk
Is like the thread which keeps the stars in place,
And, as the sight itself, invisible.
Well-pointed arrows of one quiver are we,
One showing, one beholding, one in thought;
One is our goal and purpose, one the form,
The fashion, and the measure of our dream.
Thanks to His blessings, we are brothers all
Sharing one speech, one spirit and one heart.

That Despair, Grief and Fear are the Mother of Abominations, destroying Life ; and that Belief in the Unity of God puts an end to those Foul Diseases

The amputation of desire condemns
To Death ; Life rests secure on the behest
Do not despair. Desire continuing ¹⁶
The substance is of hope, while hopelessness
Poisons the very blood of life. Despair
Presses thee down, a tombstone on thy heart,
And, though thou be as high as Alond's mount, ¹⁷
It casts thee down ; impotence is the slave
Of its poor favours, unambition hangs
Upon its skirts. Despair lulls Life asleep,
And proves the languor of its element ;
The spirit's eye is blinded by the smear
Of its collyrium, and brightest day ¹⁸
Transformed to pitchy night ; Life's faculties
Die at its breath, Life's springs are all dried up.
Despair and Sorrow sleep beneath one quilt ;
Grief, like a lancet, pierces the soul's vein.
O thou who art a prisoner of care,
Learn from the Prophet's message, *Do not grieve !* ¹⁹
This lesson fortified with trusty faith
The heart of Abu Bakr, and with the cup ²⁰
Of blessed certitude rejoiced his soul.
The Muslim, well content with God's good grace,
Is like a star, and goes upon his way
Smiling. If thou acknowledgest a God,
Shake free from sorrow, and deliver thee
From vain imagining of Fortune's turns.

Life more abundant strength of faith bestows.
No fear shall be upon them : let this be ²¹
Constantly on thy lips. When Moses strides
Before the Pharaoh, steadfast is his heart
As he remembereth *Thou shalt not fear.*²²
Fear, save of God, is the dire enemy
Of Works, the highwayman that plundereth
Life's caravan. Purpose most resolute,
When fear attends, thinks upon what may be,
And lofty zeal to circumspection yields.¹⁹
Or let its seed be sown within thy soil,
Life remains stunted of its full display.
Feeble its nature is, and well accords
With heart a-tremble and with palsied hand.
Fear robs the foot of strength to rove abroad,
And filches from the brain the power of thought.
Thy enemy, observing thee afraid,
Will pluck thee from thy bower like a bloom ;
Stronger will be the impact of his sword,
His very glance transfix thee like a knife.
Fear is a chain that fetters close our feet,
A hundred torrents roaring in our sea.
And if thy melody not freely soars,
Fear has relaxed the tension of thy strings ;
Then twist the pegs that keep thy lute in tune,
And hear its music mount into the skies
In unrestrained and passionate lament.
Fear is a spy sent from the clime of Death,
Its spirit dark and chill as Death's own heart ;
Its eye wreaks havoc in the realm of Life,
Its ear's a thief of Life's intelligence.
Whatever evil lurks within thy heart

Thou canst be certain that its origin
Is fear : fraud, cunning, malice, lies—all these
Flourish on terror, who is wrapped about
With falsehood and hypocrisy for veil,
And fondles foul sedition at her breast.
And since it is least strong when zeal is high,
It is most happy in disunion.
Who understands the Prophet's clue aright
Sees infidelity concealed in fear.

Conversation of the Arrow and the Sword

How truthfully the well-notched arrow spoke
Unto the sword in heat of battletide :
“ What magic lustre glitters in thy steel
Like fairy dancers in the Caucasus ?
Thou, who canst boast in thy long ancestry
Of Ali's trusty weapon, Dhu 'l-Faqar ; ²³
Who hast beheld the might of Khalid's arm, ²⁴
Sprinkled red sunset on the head of night—
Thine is the fire of God's omnipotence,
And neath thy shadow Paradise awaits.
Whether I wing in air, or lie encased
Within the quiver, wheresoe'er I be
I am all fire. When from the bow I speed
Towards a human breast, right well I see
Into its depth, and if it do not hold
A heart unflawed, unvisited by thoughts
Of terror or despair, swiftly my point
Plucks it asunder, and I spread it o'er
With surging gore for shift. But if that breast
Serenely throb with a believer's heart

And glow reflective to an inward light,
My soul is turned to water by its flame,
My shafts fall soft as the innocuous dew."

Emperor Alamgir and the Tiger

Shah Alamgir, that high and mighty king,²⁶
Pride and renown of Gurgan Timur's line,
In whom Islam attained a loftier fame
And wider honour graced the Prophet's Law,
He the last arrow to our quiver left
In the affray of Faith with Unbelief;
When that the impious seed of heresy,
By Akbar nourished, sprang and sprouted fresh²⁶
In Dara's soul, the candle of the heart²⁷
Was dimmed in every breast, no more secure
Against corruption our Community
Continued; then God chose from India
That humble-minded warrior, Alamgir,
Religion to revive, faith to renew.
The lightning of his sword set all ablaze
The harvest of impiety; faith's torch
Once more its radiance o'er our counsels shed.
Many the tales misguided spirits told,
Blind to the breadth of his percipient mind;
He was a moth that ever beat its wings
About the candle-flame of Unity,
An Abraham in India's idol-house.²⁸
In all the line of kings he stands alone;
His tomb is witness to his saintliness.

One day that ornament of crown and throne,
That lord of battle, saint and emperor,

Set forth into the jungle with the dawn
Attended by one faithful follower ;
Exultant in the joyous breath of morn,
Birds sang their hymns to God on every tree.
The conscient king became absorbed in prayer,
Striking his tent from this contingent world
To pitch it in the realm of truth sublime.
A tiger at that instant from the plain
Suddenly sprang ; heaven trembled at his roar ;
Scenting afar the presence of a man,
He leaped on Alamgir, and smote his loins.
The king, unviewing, drew his dagger forth
And rent the belly of the furious beast ;
His heart admitting not a thought of fear,
He stretched the tiger prostrate at his feet,
Then sped again impatiently to God
Mounting prayer's ladder to His heavenly throne.
A heart so humble and at once so proud
No other lodge but the believer's breast
Possesses ; for the servitor of Truth
Is naught before his Master, but stands firm
Against Untruth, and positive indeed.
Thou too, O ignorant man, take such a heart
Into thy hold ; let it a litter be
Wherein immortal Beauty may be borne.
Stake Self, to win Self back ; spread out the snare
Of supplication, glory to entrap ;
Let Love set fire to pale Anxiety ;
Be thou God's fox, to learn the tiger's trade.
The fear of God faith's only preface is,
All other fear is secret disbelief.

Second Pillar : Apostleship

Abraham, friend of God, *loved not the things* ²⁹
That set ; and lo, his footprint was a guide
To all successive prophets. He, the sign
And witness to the everlasting Lord,
Yearned in his heart for a *Community*, ³⁰
And from his sleepless eyes the flood of tears
Unceasing flowed, until the message came,
Cleanse thou My House. Then for our sake he made ³¹
A desert populous, and founded there ³²
A temple whither pilgrims might process.
And when the stem of *Turn Thou unto us* ³³
Burst into bud, the tillage of our Spring
Took visible shape ; God fashioned forth our form
And through Apostleship breathed in our flesh
The soul of life. We were a word unvoiced
Within this world, that by Apostleship
Became a measured verse ; and that same grace
Both shaped our being, gave us Faith and Law,
Converted our vast myriads into one,
And joined our fractions in a mighty whole
Inseparable, indivisible.
He, who is pleased to *guide whomso He will*, ³⁴
Made of Apostleship a magic ring
To draw around us ; the Community
A circle is, whose great circumference
Centres on Mecca's valley ; and by force
And virtue of that same relationship
Stands our Community unshakable,
Tidings of mercy to the world entire.
Out of that sea we surge, nor break apart

Like scattering waves ; its people, closely fenced
Within the ramparts of that holy soil,^{as}
Roar loud as jungle lions. If thou look
To prove the truth that lies within my words,
Gazing with Abu Bakr's veracious eyes,
The Prophet, power and strength of soul and heart,
Becometh more beloved than God Himself.
His Book is reinforcement to the hearts
Of all believers ; through his wisdom flows
The lifeblood of the whole Community ;
To yield his garment's hem is death—the rose
So withers at the blast of Autumn's wind.
His was the breath that gave the people life ;
His sun shone glory on their risen dawn.
In God the Individual, in him
Lives the Community, in his sun's rays
Resplendent ever ; his Apostleship
Brought concord to our purpose and our goal.
A common aim shared by the multitude
Is unity which, when it is mature,
Forms the Community ; the many live
Only by virtue of the single bond.
The Muslim's unity from natural faith
Derives, and this the Prophet taught to us,
So that we lit a lantern on Truth's way.
This pearl was fished from his unfathomed sea,
And of his bounty we are one in soul.
Let not this unity go from our hands,
And we endure to all eternity.
God set the seal of holy Law on us,
As in our Prophet all Apostleship
Is sealed. The concourse of unending days

Is radiant in our lustre ; he was Seal
 To all Apostles, to all Peoples we.
 The service of Truth's winebearer is left
 With us ; he gave to us his final glass.
No Prophet after me is of God's grace,³⁶
 And veils the modest beauty of the Faith
 Muhammad brought to men. The people's strength
 All rests in this, that still the secret guards
 Of how the Faith's Community is one.
 Almighty God has shattered every shape
 Carved by imposture, and for evermore
 Stitched up the sacred volume of Islam.
 The Muslim keeps his heart from all but God
 And shouts abroad, *No people after me.*

*That the Purpose of Muhammad's Mission was to found
 Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood among all Mankind*

Throughout the world man worshipped tyrant man,
 Despised, neglected, insignificant ;
 Caesar and Chosroes, highwaymen enthroned,³⁷
 Fettered and chained their subjects, hand and foot.
 High Priest and Pope, Sultan and Prince—for one
 Poor prey a hundred huntsmen took the field ;
 The sceptred monarch and the surpliced priest
 Each claimed his tribute from the wasted fields ;
 The bishop, eager for this abject game,
 Bartered God's pardon with the penitent.
 The Brahman from his garden raped his blooms,
 The Magian fed his harvest to the fire.³⁸
 Serfdom debased man's nature ; while his reed
 Throbbled with the threnody of his heart's blood.

Until one faithful reassigned their rights
To those whose rights they were, the Khaqan's throne³⁹
Delivering into his subjects' hands ;
Fanned their dead embers into flame anew ;
Raised up Farhad, poor hewer of the rocks,⁴⁰
To Parwiz' royal height ; brought dignity
To honest toil, and robbed the taskmasters
Of tyrant overlordship. By his might
He shattered every ancient privilege,
And built new walls to fortify mankind.
He breathed fresh life in Adam's weary bones,
Redeemed the slave from bondage, set him free.
His birth was mortal to the ancient world,
Death to the temples of idolatry.
Freedom was born out of his holy heart ;
His vineyard flowed with that delightful wine.
The world's new age, its hundred lamps ablaze,
Opened its eyes upon his loving breast.
He drew on Being's page the new design,
Brought into life a race of conquerors,
A people deaf to every voice but God's,
A moth devoted to Muhammad's flame ;
The fire of God was glowing in their breasts,
Their motes were radiant in the brilliance
Of the Sun's sanctuary. His fervour flushed
Creation all with joy ; new Kaabas rose
Where China's temples once with idols stood.
All prophets and apostles were his sires,
And in the order of his chivalry
They were *most noble who feared God the best.*⁴¹
Believers all are brothers in his heart,⁴²
Freedom the sum and substance of his flesh.

Impatient with discriminations all,
His soul was pregnant with Equality.
Therefore his sons stand up erect and free
As the tall cypresses, the ancient pledge
In him renewing, *Yea, Thou art our Lord.*⁴³
Prostration unto God had marked his brow ;
The moon and stars bow down to kiss his feet.

*The Story of Bu Ubaid and Jaban, in Illustration
of Muslim Brotherhood*

A certain general of King Yazdajird ⁴⁴
Became a Muslim's captive in the wars ;
A Guebre he was, inured to every trick
Of fortune, crafty, cunning, full of guile.
He kept his captor ignorant of his rank
Nor told him who he was, or what his name,
But said, " I beg that you will spare my life
And grant to me the quarter Muslims gain."
The Muslim sheathed his sword. " To shed thy blood",
He cried, " were impious and forbidden sin."
When Kavch's banner had been rent to shreds,⁴⁵
The fire of Sasan's sons turned all to dust,⁴⁶
It was disclosed the captive Jaban was,
Supreme commander of the Persian host.
Then was his fraud reported, and his blood
Petitioned of the Arab general ;
But Bu Ubaid, famed leader of the ranks
From far Hejaz, who needed not the aid
Of armies to assist his bold resolve
In battletide, thus answered their request.
" Friends, we are Muslims, strings upon one lute

And of one concord. Ali's voice attunes
With Abu Dharr's, although the throat be that
Of Qanbar or Bilal. Each one of us ⁴⁷
Is trustee to the whole Community
And one with it, in malice or in truce.
As the Community is the sure base
On which the Individual rests secure,
So is its covenant his sacred bond.
Though Jaban was a foeman to Islam,
A Muslim granted him immunity ;
His blood, O followers of the best of men,
May not be spilled by any Muslim sword."

*The Story of Sultan Murad and the Architect,
in Illustration of Muslim Equality*

An architect there was, that in Khojand
Was born, a famous craftsman of his kind,
Worthy to be an offspring of Farhad.
Sultan Murad commanded him to build
A mosque, the which pleased not his majesty,
So that he waxed right furious at his faults.
The baleful fire flared in the ruler's eyes ;
Drawing his dagger, he cut off the hand
Of that poor wretch, so that the spurting blood
Gushed from his forearm. In such hapless plight
He came before the cadî, and retold
The tyrant's felony, that had destroyed
The cunning hand which shaped the granite rock.
" O thou whose words a message are of Truth,"
He cried, " whose toil it is to keep alive
Muhammad's Law, I am no ear-bored slave

Patient to wear the ring of monarchs' might.
 Determine my appeal by the Koran!"
 The upright *cadi* bit his lips in ire
 And summoned to his court the unjust king
 Who, hearing the Koran invoked, turned pale
 With awe, and came like any criminal
 Before the judge, his eyes cast down in shame,
 His cheeks as crimson as the tulip's glow.
 On one side stood the appellant, and on one
 The high exalted emperor, who spoke.
 "I am ashamed of this that I have wrought
 And make confession of my grievous crime."
 "*In retribution*", quoth the judge, "*is life*,"⁴⁸
 And by that law life finds stability.
 The Muslim slave no less is than free men,
 Nor is the emperor's blood of richer hue
 Than the poor builder's." Listening to these words
 Of Holy Writ, Murad shook off his sleeve
 And bared his hand. The plaintiff thereupon
 No longer could keep silence. "*God commands*"⁴⁹
Justice and kindness," recited he.
 "For God's sake and Muhammad's," he declared,
 "I do forgive him." Note the majesty
 Of the Apostle's Law, and how an ant⁵⁰
 Triumphantly outfought a Solomon!
 Before the tribunal of the Koran
 Master and slave are one, the mat of reeds
 Coequal with the throne of rich brocade.

*Concerning Muslim Freedom, and the Secret of
the Tragedy of Kerbela*

Whoever maketh compact with the One
That Is, hath been delivered from the yoke
Of every idol. Unto Love belongs
The true believer, and Love unto him.
Love maketh all things possible to us.
Reason is ruthless ; Love is even more,
Purer, and nimbler, and more unafraid.
Lost in the maze of cause and of effect
Is Reason ; Love strikes boldly in the field
Of Action. Crafty Reason sets a snare ;
Love overthrows the prey with strong right arm.
Reason is rich in fear and doubt ; but Love
Has firm resolve, faith indissoluble.
Reason constructs, to make a wilderness ;
Love lays wide waste, to build all up anew.
Reason is cheap, and plentiful as air ;
Love is most scarce to find, and of great price.
Reason stands firm upon phenomena,
But Love is naked of material robes.
Reason says, "Thrust thyself into the fore" ;
Love answers, "Try thy heart, and prove thyself."
Reason by acquisition is informed
Of other ; Love is born of inward grace
And makes account with Self. Reason declares,
"Be happy, and be prosperous" ; Love replies,
"Become a servant, that thou mayest be free."
Freedom brings full contentment to Love's soul,
Freedom, the driver of Love's riding-beast.
Hast thou not heard what things in time of war

Love wrought with lustful Reason? I would speak
Of that great leader of all men who love
Truly the Lord, that upright cypress-tree
Of the Apostle's garden, Ali's son,⁵¹
Whose father led the sacrificial feast
That he might prove *a mighty offering*; ⁵²
And for that prince of the best race of men
The Last of the Apostles gave his back
To ride upon, *a camel passing fair*.⁵³
Crimsoned his blood the cheek of jealous Love
(Which theme adorns my verse in beauty bold)
Who is sublime in our Community
As *Say, the Lord is God* exalts the Book.⁵⁴
Moses and Pharaoh, Shabbir and Yazid—⁵⁵
From Life spring these conflicting potencies;
Truth lives in Shabbir's strength; Untruth is that
Fierce, final anguish of regretful death.
And when the Caliphate first snapped its thread
From the Koran, in Freedom's throat was poured
A fatal poison; like a rain-charged cloud
The effulgence of the best of peoples rose
Out of the West, to spill on Kerbela,
And in that soil, that desert was before,
Sowed, as he died, a field of tulip-blood.
There, till the Resurrection, tyranny
Was evermore cut off; a garden fair
Immortalizes where his lifeblood surged.
For Truth alone his blood dripped to the dust,
Wherefore he has become the edifice ⁵⁶
Of faith in God's pure Unity. Indeed
Had his ambition been for earthly rule,
Not so provisioned would he have set forth

On his last journey, having enemies
Innumerable as the desert sands,
Equal his friends in number to God's Name.
The mystery that was epitomized
In Abraham and Ishmael through his life
And death stood forth at last in full revealed.
Firm as a mountain-chain was his resolve,
Impetuous, unwavering to its goal.
The Sword is for the glory of the Faith
And is unsheathed but to defend the Law.
The Muslim, servant unto God alone,
Before no Pharaoh casteth down his head.
His blood interpreted these mysteries,
And waked our slumbering Community.
He drew the sword *There is none other god*
And shed the blood of them that served the lie ;
Inscribing in the wilderness *save God*
He wrote for all to read the exordium
Of our salvation. From Husain we learned
The riddle of the Book, and at his flame
Kindled our torches. Vanished now from ken
Damascus' might, the splendour of Baghdad,
Granada's majesty, all lost to mind ;
Yet still the strings he smote within our soul
Vibrate, still ever new our faith abides
In his *Allahu Akbar*. Gentle breeze,⁵⁷
Thou messenger of them that are afar,
Bear these my tears to lave his holy dust.

*That since the Muhammadan Community is Founded
upon Belief in One God and Apostleship, therefore it
is not Bounded by Space*

Our Essence is not bound to any Place ;
The vigour of our wine is not contained
In any bowl ; Chinese and Indian
Alike the sherd that constitutes our jar,
Turkish and Syrian alike the clay
Forming our body ; neither is our heart
Of India, or Syria, or Rum,
Nor any fatherland do we profess
Except Islam. When pure-descended Kaab ⁸⁸
Brought to the Prophet for an offering
His famed *Banat Su'ad*, whereon he strung
The night-illuming jewels of his praise,
And there addressed him as *an unsheathed sword*
Of India, it did not please his heart
(Being sublimer than high heaven's sphere)
To be attributed to any clime ;
And so the Prophet answered, " Rather say
A Sword of God ; if Truth thou worshippest,
No other pathway travel but of Truth."
Full well he knew the mystery of Part
And Whole, the very dust beneath his feet
Being the magical collyrium
Laid on the eyes of all God's messengers ;
And so he spoke to his Community,
" *Of all this world of yours, I love alone* ⁸⁹
Obedient hearts, sweet perfumes, women chaste."
If the perception of realities
Guideth thy steps, the subtlety confined

In that word *yours* will not be hid from thee.
Indeed, that lantern of all Being's night
Dwelt in the world, but was not of the world ;
His splendour, that consumed the adoring breasts
Of holy angels, shone *while Adam yet* ⁸⁰
Was clay and water. Of what land he was
I know not ; this much only I do know,
He is our comrade. These base elements
He reckoned for *our* world, himself our guest.
We, who have lost the souls within our breasts,
Have therefore lost ourselves in this mean dust.
Thou art a Muslim ; do not bind thy heart
To any clime, nor lose thyself within
This world dimensionate. The Muslim true
Is not contained in any land on earth ;
Syria and Rum are lost within his heart.
Grasp thou the heart, and in its vast expanse
Lose this mirage of water and of clay.

Our Master, fleeing from his fatherland,
Resolved the knot of Muslim nationhood.
His wisdom founded one Community—
The world its parish—on the sacred charge
To civilize ; that Ruler of our faith
Of his abundant bounty gave the earth
Entire to be the confines of our mosque.
He, whom God eulogized in the Koran
And promised He would *save his soul alive*,⁸¹
Struck hapless awe into his enemies
So that they trembled at his majesty.
Why fled he, then, from his ancestral home ? ⁸²
Supposest thou he ran before his foes ?
The chroniclers, ill understanding what

The Flight portends, have hid the truth from us.
 Flight is the law that rules the Muslim's life,
 And is a cause of his stability ;
 Its meaning is, to leap from shallowness,
 To quit the dew, the ocean to subdue.
 Transgress the bloom ; the garden is thy goal ;
 The loss of less more vastly gain adorns.
 The sun's great glory is in ranging free ;
 The skies' arena lies beneath his feet.
 Be not a streamlet, seeking wealth from rain ;
 Be boundless ; quest no limit in the world.
 The frowning sea was once a simple plain,
 Played being shore, and liquefied of shame.
 Have thou the will to master everything,
 That thou mayest win dominion over all ;
 Plunge like a fish, and populate the sea ;
 Shake off the chains of too constricted space.
 He who has burst from all dimensions' bonds
 Ranges through all directions, like the sky.
 The rose's scent by parting from the rose
 Leaps far abroad, and through the garden's breadth
 Disseminates itself. Thou, who hast snatched
 One corner of the meadow for thine own,
 Like the poor nightingale art satisfied
 To serenade one rose. Be like the breeze ;
 Cast off the burden of complacency
 From thy broad shoulders ; in thy wide embrace
 Gather the garden. Be thou wary ; lo,
 These times are full of treachery, the way
 Beset by brigands ; wayfarer, beware !

*That the Country is not the Foundation of
the Community*

Now Brotherhood has been so cut to shreds
That in the stead of the Community
The Country has been given pride of place
In men's allegiance and constructive work ;
The Country is the darling of their hearts,
And wide Humanity is whittled down
Into dismembered tribes. Men thought to find
Paradise in *that miserable abode* ⁶²
Of ruin where they made the peoples dwell.
This tree has banished heaven from the world
And borne for fruit the bitterness of war ;
Humanity is but a legend, man
Become a stranger to his fellow-man.
The spirit has departed from the flesh,
Only the seven disjointed limbs remain ;
Vanished is humankind ; there but abide
The disunited nations. Politics
Dethroned religion ; this tree first struck root
Within a Western garden, and the tale
Of Christianity was all rolled up,
The radiance of the Churches' lantern dimmed ;
Pope powerless and baffled, from his hand
The counters scattered ; Jesus' followers
Spurning the Church ; debased the coinage
Of the True Cross's law. When atheism
First rent religion's garment, there arrived
That Satan's messenger, the Florentine ⁶⁴
Who worshipped falsehood, whose collyrium
Shattered the sight of men. He wrote a scroll

For Princes, and so scattered in our clay
 The seed of conflict ; his fell genius
 Decamped to darkness, and his swordlike pen
 Struck Truth asunder. Carving images
 Like Azar was his trade ; his fertile mind ⁶⁵
 Conceived a new design ; his novel faith
 Proclaimed the State the only worshipful ;
 His thoughts the ignoble turned to praiseworthy.
 So, when the feet of this adorable
 He kissed, the touchstone that he introduced
 To test the truth was Gain. His doctrine caused
 Falsehood to flourish ; plotting stratagems
 Became an art. A sad and sorry end
 Attended the regime which he devised,
 That calthrop which he scattered on the road
 Of the advancing days. Dark night he wrapped
 About the peoples' eyes ; deception called,
 In his vocabulary, expediency.

*That the Muhammadan Community is also Unbounded
 in Time, since the Survival of this noble Community
 has been Divinely Promised*

In Spring thou hast heard the clamorous nightingale,
 And watched the resurrection of the flowers ;
 The buds arrayed like brides ; from the dark earth
 A veritable city of stars arise ;
 The meadow bathed in the soft tears of dawn
 That slumbered to the river's lullaby.
 A bud bursts into blossom on the branch ;
 The breeze new-risen takes it to her breast ;
 A bloom lies bleeding in the gatherer's hand

And like a perfume from the mead departs.
The ring-dove builds his nest ; the nightingale
Takes wing ; the dew drops softly, and the scent
Is sped. What though these mortal tulips die,
They lessen not the splendour of the Spring ;
For all the loss, its treasure still abides
Abundant, still the thronging blossoms smile.
The season of the rose endures beyond
The fragile eglantine, yea, it outlives
The rose's self, the cypress, and the fir ;
The jewel-nourishing mine bears jewels yet,
Unminished by the shattering of one gem.
Dawn is departed from the East, and night
Gone from the West ; their too-brief-historied cup
Visits no more the winevat of the days ;
Yet, though the draught be drunk, the wine remains
Eternal as the morrow that awaits
When all our yesterdays are drowned in death.
So individuals, as they depart,
Are fallen pages from the calendar
Of peoples more enduring ; though the friend
Is on a journey, the companionship
Still stays ; the Individual is gone
Abroad, unstirring the Community.
Other each essence is, the qualities
Other ; they differ both in how each lives
And how they die. The Individual
Arises from a handful of mere clay,
The Nation owes its birth to one brave heart ;
The Individual has for his span
Sixty or seventy years, a century
Is for the Nation as a single breath.

The Individual is kept alive
 By the concomitance of soul and flesh,
 The Nation lives by guarding ancient laws ;
 Death comes upon the Individual
 When dries life's river, and the Nation dies
 When it forsakes the purpose of its life.
 Though the Community must pass away
 Like any Individual when *Fate* ⁶⁶
Issues the fiat none may disobey,
 Islam's Community is a divine
 Undying marvel, having origin
 In that great compact, *Yea, Thou art our Lord.*
 This people is indifferent to Fate,
 Immovable in *Lo, We have sent down* ⁶⁷
Remembrance, which abides while there is yet
 One to remember, whose continuance
 Persists with it. When God revealed the words
They seek God's light to extinguish, this bright lamp ⁶⁸
 Was never troubled it might flicker out.
 'Tis a Community that worships God
 In perfect faith, a people well-beloved
 By every man who has a conscient heart.
 God drew this trusty blade out of the sheath
 Of Abraham's desires, that by its edge
 Sincerity might live, and all untruth
 Consume before the lightning of its stroke.
 We, who are proof of God's high Unity
 And guardians of the Wisdom and the Book,
 Encountered heaven's malice long ago,
 The unsuspected menace of the hordes
 Of savage Tartary, loosed on our heads
 To prove its terror. Not the Judgment Day

Shall match the staring horror of those swords,
The thunder of those legions armed with death.
Confusion sore confounded in the breast
Of that disaster slept ; its yesterday
Gave birth to no glad morrow. Muslim might
Quivered in dust and blood ; Baghdad beheld
Such scenes as Rome ne'er witnessed in her throes.
Now ask, if so thou wilt, what new design
Purposing Fate, malignant as of old,
Proposed this holocaust ; whose garden sprang
Out of the Tartar fire ? Whose turban wears
The rose transmuted from those lambent flames ?⁶⁹
Because our nature is of Abraham
And our relationship to God the same
As that great patriarch's, out of the fire's depths
Anew we blossom, every Nimrod's blaze
Convert to roses. When the burning brands
Of Time's great revolution ring our mead,
Then Spring returns. The mighty power of Rome,
Conqueror and ruler of the world entire,
Sank into small account ; the golden glass
Of the Sassanians was drowned in blood ;
Broken the brilliant genius of Greece ;
Egypt too failed in the great test of Time,
Her bones lie buried neath the Pyramids.
Yet still the voice of the muezzin rings
Throughout the earth, still the Community
Of World-Islam maintains its ancient forms.
Love is the universal law of life,
Mingling the fragmentary elements
Of a disordered world. Through our hearts' glow
Love lives, irradiated by the spark

There is no god but God. Though, like a bud,
Our hearts are prisoned by oppressive care,
If we should die, the garden too will die.

*That the Organization of the Community is only
Possible through Law, and that the Law of the
Muhammadian Community is the Koran*

When a Community forsakes its Law
Its parts are severed, like the scattered dust.
The being of the Muslim rests alone
On Law, which is in truth the inner core
Of the Apostle's faith. A rose is born
When its component petals are conjoined
By Law ; and roses, being likewise bound
By Law together, fashion a bouquet.
As sound controlled creates a melody
So, when control is absent, dissonance
Results. The breath we draw within our throat
Is but a wave of air which, in the reed
Being constricted, blows a tuneful note.
Knowest thou what thy Law is, wherein lies
Beneath yon spheres the secret of thy power ?
It is the living Book, that wise Koran
Whose wisdom is eternal, uncreate.
The secrets of the fashioning of life
Are therein written ; instability
Is firmly established by its potency.
Undoubted and unchanging are its words,⁷⁰
Its verses to interpretation not
Beholden ; in its strength the raw desire
Acquires maturity, the bowl fears not

To dash against the rock. It casts away
The shackling chains, and leads the free man forth,
But brings the exultant captor unto woe.
The final message to all humankind
Was borne by him elect of God to be
A mercy unto every living thing ; ⁷¹
By this the worthless unto worth attains,
The prostrate slave lifts up his head on high.
Having by heart this message, highwaymen
Turned guides upon the road, and by this Book
Were qualified high masters of the rolls ;
Rude desert-farers through one lantern's glow
A hundred revelations to their brain
In every science won. So he, *whose load* ⁷²
The mountains' massive shoulders could not bear,
Clove by his might the power of the spheres.
See how the capital of all our hopes
Is lodged securely in our children's breasts !
The weary wanderer in the wilderness
Unwatered, eyes aflame in the hot sun,
His camel nimbler than the agile deer,
Its breath as fire, when he would look to sleep
Casting him down beneath some shady palm,
Then with the dawn awake, the caravan
Clanged to departure, ever journeying
Through the wide prairies, unfamiliar
With roof and door, stranger to fixed abodes—
When his wild heart responded vibrantly
To the Koran's warm glow, its restless waves
Sank to the calm of a sequestered pearl.
Reading the lesson of its verses clear
He who had come a slave went forth from God

A master. Now upon his instrument
New melodies imperial were heard ;
Jamshid's high throne he trampled underfoot ;
Cities sprang up out of the dust he trod,
A hundred bowers blossomed from his rose.

O thou, whose faith by custom is enslaved,
Imprisoned by the charms of heathendom,
Thou who hast *torn thy heritage to shreds* ⁷³
Treading the highway to a *hateful goal*,⁷⁴
If thou wouldst live the Muslim life anew
This cannot be, except by the Koran
Thou livest. See the Sufi in his garb
Of coarse-cut wool, enraptured and entranced
By the intoxication of the song
Of mystic minstrelsy, his heart inflamed
By the fierce fervour of Iraqi's verse ! ⁷⁵
Little do his wild ecstasies accord
With the austere Koran ; the dervish cap
And mat of reeds replace the crown and throne ;
His boasted poverty rich tribute takes
Secured on many a hermitage endowed.
The preacher, with his wealth of anecdote
And wordy legend, little has to tell
Of Truth, for all his fine grandiloquence ;
Khatib and Dailami are on his lips, ⁷⁶
In every weak Tradition he delights, ⁷⁷
The little met with, and the insecure.
It is thy duty to recite the Book,
And therein find the purpose thou dost seek.

*That in Times of Decadence Strict Conformity
is Better than Free Speculation*

The present age has many tumults hid
Beneath its head ; its restless temperament
Swarms with disorders. The society
Of ancient nations in these modern times
Is in confusion ; sapless hangs life's bough.
The glamour and the glitter of our days
Have made us strangers to our very selves,
And robbed our instrument of melody ;
Filched from our heart its pristine fire, and dimmed
Within our breast the radiance and the flame
There is no god but God. Whene'er decay
Destroys the balanced temperament of life,
Then the Community may look to find
Stability in strict conformity.
Go thou thy fathers' road, for therein lies
Tranquillity ; conformity connotes
The holding fast of the Community.
In time of Autumn, thou who lackest leaf
Alike and fruit, break never from the tree,
Hoping that Spring may come. Since thou hast lost
The sea, be prudent, lest a greater loss
Befall thee ; the more carefully preserve
Thy own thin rivulet ; for it may hap
Some mountain torrent shall replenish thee
And thou once more be tossed upon the breast
Of the redeeming tempest. If thy flesh
Is yet possessed of a discerning eye,
Take warning from the Israelitish case ;
Consider well their variable fate,

Now hot, now cold ; regard the obduracy,
The hardness of their spare and tenuous soul.
Sluggishly flows the blood within their veins,
Their furrowed brow sore smitten on the stones
Of porticoes a hundred. Though heaven's grip
Hath pressed and squeezed their grape, the memory
Of Moses and of Aaron liveth yet ;
And though their ardent song hath lost its flame,
Still palpitates the breath within their breast.
For when the fabric of their nationhood
Was rent asunder, still they laboured on
To keep the highroad of their forefathers.
O thou whose ancient concourse is dispersed,
Within whose breast the lamp of life is out,
Grave on thy heart the truth of Unity,
And in Conformity essay to mend
The ruin of thy fortune. In the time
Of decadence, to seek to exercise
The speculative judgment of the mind
Completes the people's havoc finally ;
Salvation lieth less in following
The blinkered pedant's dictum, being found
In humble imitation of the past.
Caprice corrupted not thy fathers' brain ;
The labour of the pious was unsoiled
By interested motive ; finer far
The thread of thought their meditation wove,
As closer to the Prophet's way conformed
Their self-denial. Jaafar's raptured view ⁷⁸
And Razi's patient delving are no more ; ⁷⁹
Departed is the glory that adorned
The Arab nation ; narrow shrunk for us

The defile of the Faith, whose mysteries
 Every impostor boasteth to possess.
 Thou, who art stranger to the secret truths
 Of Faith, if thou art wise, accord thyself
 With one sound Law ; for I have heard it said
 By those who take and know the pulse of Life,
 Thy contrariety severs Life's veins.
 The Muslim lives by following one Law ;
 The body of our Faith's Community
 Throbs vital to the Word of the Koran.
 All earth we are ; that is our conscient heart ;
 Hold firm to its protection, since it is
The Cord of God. Upon its sacred thread ⁸⁰
 Gem-like be safely strung ; or otherwise
 Be scattered, as the dust upon the wind.

*That the Maturity of Communal Life Derives
 from Following the Divine Law*

Seek thou no other meaning in the Law,
 Nor look save light to find within the gem ;
 God was the jeweller who fashioned forth
 This jewel, diamantine through and through.
 Law is the only knowledge of the Truth,
 Love the sole basis of the Prophet's code ;
 The Individual through Law attains
 A faith maturer, and more fair adorned.
 The rule of Law secures an ordered life
 To all the nation, which established rule
 Condition is of its continuance.
 Power is patent in its knowledge, this
 The sign of Moses' staff and potent hand ; ⁸¹

So I declare the secret of Islam
Is Law, in which all things begin and end.
Since thou art called to be a guardian
Of the Faith's wisdom, I will tell to thee
A subtle truth of the perspicuous Law.
If any Muslim be engaged upon
A meritorious act, and causelessly
Therein be challenged, forthwith it becomes
His sacred duty to discharge the same ;
Power is deemed the very spring of Life.
Upon the day of battle, if the foe
Supposing truce is imminent neglects
His army's marshalling, and casually
Confronts his fortune, breaking down the wall
And citadel of his defence ; until
His order is restored, to march against
His unarmed country is prohibited.
Knowest thou then the mystery of this
Divine commandment ? Life not living is
Except we live in danger. Law requires
That when to war thou comest, thou shalt blaze
A fiery torch, and split the throat of rock.
Law tries the power of the strong right arm ;
Confronting thee with Alond's massive height,
It bids thee pound into collyrium
That craggy mount, and with the ardent breath
Drawn from thy throat its flint to liquefy.
The lean and feeble sheep is scarce a prey
Worthy the tiger's claw ; or if the hawk
Consorts with sparrows, meaner-spirited
Than its poor victims it shall soon become.
The Lawgiver, to whom all fair and foul

Was fully known, this recipe of power
For thee prescribed. By toil thy nerves are steeled,
And thou art raised to eminence in the world ;
Or be thou wounded, this will make thee strong,
Yea, and mature as a firm mountain-chain.
Full life's religion is Muhammad's faith,
His code the commentary on life's law ;
Be thou earth-lowly, it shall lift thee up
High as the heavens, and will fashion thee
Harmonious to God's summons. The rough rock
Is polished to a mirror by this faith,
And this unrusts the steel's corroding heart.

Now when the Prophet's watchword passed from ken
His people held no more the secret key
To their continuance. That lusty sprout
Tall and firm-rooted (Muslim of the wastes
Mounted on camel, who in Batha's vale **
Took his first steps) that by the desert warmth
Was nourished up, now fanned by Persia's breeze
Is so diminished, that it hath become
Thin as a reed. He who was wont to slay
Tigers like sheep now winces at the ant
Trampled unwittingly ; he who in joy,
Allahu Akbar crying, turned the rock
To running water, trembles at the note
Of amorous nightingales ; he whose high will
Reckoned the mountain trifling as a straw
Commits himself entire to abject trust ;
He whose firm blow once broke his foemen's neck,
His heart is wounded by his own breast's beat ;
He whose bold tread a hundred tumults limned
Now cowers in retirement from the world ;

He whose command none dared to disobey,
Before whose door great Alexander stood
A suppliant, and Darius begged his bread,
His ardour is attuned to mean content,
His boast the proffered bowl of mendicants.
Shaikh Ahmad, Saiyid lofty as the spheres,⁸³
From whose keen brain the sun's self borrowed light
(The roses that bedeck his holy grave
No other god but God breathe from his dust)
Thus spoke to a disciple : " O thou life
Of thy dear father, it behoves us all
That we beware of Persia's fantasies ;
Though Persia's thoughts the heavens have surpassed
They equally transgress the boundaries
Set by the Prophet's Faith." Brother, give ear
To his sage counsel, and attentively
Receive the rede of a protagonist
Of our Community ; take these wise words
To fortify thy heart ; conform thyself
With Arab ways, to be a Muslim true.

*That a Good Communal Character Derives from
Discipline According to the Manners of the Prophet*

A mendicant like Fate inexorable
Battered upon our door incessantly ;
Enraged, I broke a stave upon his head,
And all the harvest of his beggary
Spilled from his hands. In youth's beginning days
The reason thinks not upon right and wrong.
My father, by my temper much distressed,
Grew very pale ; the tulips of his cheeks

Withered ; an anguished sigh sprang from his lips ;
A star gleamed in his eye, brief glittering
Upon his lashes, and then slowly fell.
And as a bird that in the time of Fall
Trembles within his nest when dawn blows chill,
So in my flesh shivered my heedless soul ;
The Laila of my patience now no more ⁸⁴
Rode peacefully the litter of my heart.
And then my father spoke : " Upon that morn
The people of the Best of Messengers
Are gathered up before the Lord of All,
Warriors of his pure Community
And guardians of his Wisdom's loveliness,
Martyrs who proved the Faith—all these like stars
Shall shine within that peopled firmament ;
Ascetics too, and they that loved their God
With anguished hearts, and scholars erudite,
And shamefast rebels against God's commands.
Then in the midst of that great company
This suffering beggar's cries shall mount on high.
O thou condemned to tread an arduous road
Unmounted, footsore, what am I to say
When this the Prophet asks me : ' God to thee
Committed a young Muslim, and he won
No portion of instruction from my school ;
What, was this labour too, too hard for thee,
So that that heap of clay became not man ? ' "
So gentle was my noble sire's reproof
That I was torn by shame and hope and fear :
" Reflect a little, son, and bring to mind
The last great gathering of the Prophet's fold ;
Look once again on my white hairs, and see.

How now I tremble between fear and hope ;
Do not thy father this foul injury,
O put him not to shame before his Lord ! ”

Thou art a bud burst from Muhammad's branch ;
Break into bloom before the genial breeze
Of his warm Spring ; win thee the scent and hue
Of that sweet season ; strive to gain for thee
Some fragment of his character sublime.

Well said great Rumi, guide in whose shrunk drop
An ocean of deep wisdom slumbereth :

“ Snap not the thread of thy brief days from him ”
Who was the Seal of Prophets ; little trust
In thy poor craft and faltering footsteps place.”

The nature of the Muslim through and through
Is lovingkindness ; with both hand and tongue
He strives to be a mercy in the world,
As he whose fingers split the moon in twain
Embraces in his mercy all mankind.

Noble was he, in every attribute ;
Thou art no member of our company
If from his station thou departest far.
Bird of our garden, one in song and tongue
With us, if thou dost own a melody
Carol it not alone, nor let it soar
But on a branch that in our garden grows.
Whatever thing has capital of life

Dies in an uncongenial element ;
Art thou a nightingale ? Fly in the mead,
And with thy fellow-minstrels meditate
Thy song. Art thou an eagle ? Do not live
At ocean's bottom ; in the solitude
Of the unpeopled desert make thy home.

Art thou a star? Shine in thy firmament,
Nor set thy foot beyond thy proper bounds.

If thou wilt take a drop of April shower
And nurture it within the garden's close
Till, like the dew of the abounding Spring,
A rosebud takes it to its near embrace,
Then, in the rays of heaven-glittering dawn
Whose magic knots the blossoms on the branch,
Thou shalt draw out the lucent element
Within its substance, all the ecstasy
Of leaping in its trembling particles.
What is thy jewel? But a watery wave;
What is thy effort? Naught save a mirage.
Hurl it to ocean, that it may become
A jewel gleaming like a tremulous star.
The April raindrop, banished from the sea,
Dies on the cornstalk with the morning dew.
The pure clay of the Muslim is a gem;
Its lustre and its radiance derive
Out of the Prophet's ocean. Come thou, then,
Brief April shower, come into his breast,
And issue from his mighty sea, a pearl!
Outshine the sun upon this shadowy world,
And glow forever in immortal light.

*That the Life of the Community Requires a Visible
Focus, and that the Focus of the Islamic Community
is Mecca's Sacred House*

Now I will loose for thee the knotted cord
That is Life's riddle, and reveal to thee
Life's mysteries; its trade, from Self to leap

Swift as a phantom, nimbly to escape
From the constriction of Dimension's grasp.
Then how comes Life into this world of late
And soon? How does its instant time give birth
To yesterdays and morrows? Look upon
Thyself, if thou possessest eyes to see;
Fool, art thou aught but constantly aleap?
So, to display its glow invisible
Life's torch contrived a curtain of its smoke,
And that its motion might be seen at peace,
Its wave was in the gem immobilized.
Life's furnace drew its breath, forthwith became
A tulip, and burst blooming from the branch.
Thy thought is immature, lame, slow to rise,
If thou suppose the mortal flower itself
The fleeting colour. Life is not a bird
A-building nests; 'tis but a wing of hue
And wholly flight; imprisoned in the cage,
Yet ever free; lamenteth as it sings;
Washeth each moment from its wing the will
To fly, yet ever seeks new stratagems
Itself devising; bindeth knot on knot
Its own affairs, yet with consummate ease
Resolveth all its problems. Swift-paced Life
Stands rooted in the mire, that it may feel
Pulsing a doubled joy to walk abroad.
Anthems unheard lie dormant in its flame;
To-morrow, yesterday, the children are
Of its to-day. Each moment it creates
Fresh difficulties, passing freely through;
Thus, instantly its task is ever new.
Though like a scent it is all will to leap,

When in the breast it maketh its abode
It is a breath. Upon itself it spins
Its threads, becomes a skein, and knots itself.
The seed, that holdeth knotted in its grain
The leaf and fruit, in good time openeth
Its eyes upon itself, and is a tree ;
Creating out of water and of clay
A garment, it revealeth hand and foot,
Eye, yea, and heart. Life chooseth to confine
Itself within the body's solitude,
And Life createth mighty companies.

Such is the law that governeth the birth
Of nations. Life gathereth on a point
Of focus which, related to the ring,
Is as the spirit hidden in the flesh,
The track of the circumference concealed
Within the centre. Peoples win their bond
And order from a focus, and that same
Perpetuates the nation's sum of days.
The Sacred House at once our secret is
And guardian of our secret, our heart's fire
And instrument whereon our passion plays.
We are a breath nurtured within its breast ;
The body we, and it the precious soul.
Our garden glitters joyous in its dew,
Our fields are watered from its holy well.
Its dancing motes give lustre to the sun
Plunging into its firmament profound.
We are the proof that justifies its claim,
Attestors witnessing for Abraham.
This made our voices loud upon the earth,
Stitched up with Time our Pre-eternity ;

In circumambulation of its shrine
Our pure Community draws common breath,
Dawn's sun encaged ; by its arithmetic
The many count as one, and in that tie
Of oneness thy self-mastery waxes strong.
Thou livest by a sanctuary's bond
And shalt endure, so long as thou shalt go
About the shrine thereof. Upon this earth
By congregation lives a people's soul,
And congregation is the mystery
Of Mecca's power. Take heed once again,
Enlightened Muslim, by the tragic fate
Of Moses' people, who, when they gave up
Their focus from their grasp, the thread was snapped
That bound their congregation each to each.
That nation, nurtured up upon the breast
Of God's apostles, and whereof the part
Was privy to the secrets of the whole,
Suddenly smitten by the hand of Time
Poured out its lifeblood in slow agony.
The tendrils of its vine are withered now,
Nor even any willow weeping grows
More from its soil ; exile has robbed its tongue
Of common speech ; both nest and birdsong gone ;
The candle out ; dead the lamenting moth—
My poor dust trembles at the history.
O thou, sore wounded by the sword of Fate,
Prisoner of confusion, doubt, dismay,
Wrap thee in pilgrim robes ; unshroud the dawn
Of night's dark dust. Plunge, as thy forebears did,
Into prostration ; lose thyself, until
Thou art entire prostration. Long ago

The Muslim fashioned meek humility,
And thence developed a world-shaking pride ;
Upon God's path the thorn-points pierced his feet ;
He wore a rose-bower in his turban's fold.

*That True Solidarity Consists in Adopting a Fixed
Communal Objective, and that the Objective of the
Muhammadan Community is the Preservation and
Propagation of Unitarianism*

And now I will impart to thee the tongue
Of all things that have being ; in this speech
The letters and articulated sounds
Are life's activities. When life is bound
In firm attachment to an aim professed
The opening verse rises spontaneously ;
And if that purpose serves us for a goad,
Swift as the tempest gallopeth our steed.
The goal avowed is the true mystery
Of life's continuance, that focuses
The restless flow of its mercurial powers.
When life is conscious of a purposed aim,
All means material yield to its control ;
It makes its self the follower of that goal,
For its sole sake collects, selects, rejects.
The helmsman shoreward bound resolves to sail
The flooding main ; the destination far
Determines the selection of the paths.
The moth's heart bears the brand of the delight
Of burning, for which joy it flutters still
About the candle. If the madman Qais "
Was wanderer in the wilderness, his aim

Was the high litter wherein Laila rode.
Now be our Laila but familiar
With cities, never shall we lift our tread
To span the desert. In the enterprise
The purpose lies as hidden as the soul
Within the body, and from this alone
Each labour takes its quality and size.
The blood that circulateth in our veins
The nimbler moveth, having the desire
To reach a goal ; life's self consumes itself
In that bright flame, aglow with tulip-fire.
The Goal is as a plectrum, that awakes
The hidden music in the instrument
Of high ambition, an attractive point
Whereunto moves all centripetal force ;
This stirs a people's hands and feet to move
In vital unison, one vision clear
Bestowing on a hundred several sights.
Be the mad lover of the loveliness
Of noble purpose ; flutter like a moth
About this ardent lamp. Sweet was the air
Qum's music-maker sang, the silken strings
Sweeping responsive to his pulsing thought :
" While yet the traveller bends to pluck the thorn " ⁸⁷
That pricks his foot, the litter vanishes."
If thou art heedless, but for one brief breath,
A hundred leagues thou strayest from thy stage.
This ancient creature, that men call the world,
Out of the mingling of the elements
Derived its body ; a hundred reed-beds sowed
That one lament might burgeon ; bathed in blood
A hundred meads, to yield one tulip-bloom.

Many the shapes it fetched and cast and broke
To grave upon Life's tablet thy design ;
Many laments it sowed in the soul's tith
Till sprang the music of one call to prayer.
Awhile it battled sternly with the free,
And had much traffic with false lords, at last
To strew the seed of faith in the heart's soil
And on the tongue to cry *There is One God.*
No other god but God—this is the point
On which the world concentrically turns,
This the conclusion of the world's affairs.
From this the sphere derives its strength to wheel,
The sun its constancy and brilliance,
The sea her gems, created of its glow,
That set the ocean's billows quivering.
This is the breeze that fans the earth to bloom,
This rapturous glow a few poor feathers flames
Into the nightingale ; and this same fire
Runs like a torch along the vineyard's veins
And glitters crimson in the dusty bowl.
In Being's instrument its melodies
Lie hidden ; O musician, Being's lute
Seeketh for thee ; within thy body flow
A hundred songs, as freely in thy veins
The lifeblood pulses ; rise, and smite the strings !
Allahu Akbar ! This the secret holds
Of thy existence ; wherefore let it be
Thy purpose to preserve and propagate
No other god. If thou a Muslim art,
Till all the world proclaims the Name of God
Thou canst not rest one moment. Knowest thou not
The verse in Holy Scripture, calling thee

To be *a people just, God's witnesses?* ⁸⁸
Thou art the glow and glory of the days,
And made to testify to all mankind ;
To all who comprehend the weight of words
Make general proclamation, and impart
The learned gospel of God's Messenger.
Unlettered was he, *innocent of guile* ⁸⁹
The words he uttered, that elucidate
The mystery *He did not go astray.* ⁹⁰
Yet, when he held the pulse of living things,
The secrets of Life's constitution he
Forthwith revealed, and cleansed of ancient blight
The garment of the tulips of this mead.
Life here below is bound up with his Faith
Nor can survive, save guarded by his Law.
Having his Book beneath thy arm, stride out
With greater boldness to the battlefield
Of works ; for human thought, idolatrous
And idol-fashioning, is all the time
In quest of some new image ; in these days
It follows once again old Azar's trade, ⁹¹
And man creates an ever novel god
Whose joy is shedding blood, whose hallowed name
Is Colour, Fatherland, Blood-Brotherhood.
Humanity is slaughtered like a sheep
Before this worthless idol. Thou, whose lips
Have touched the sacred bowl of Abraham,
Whose blood is ardent with his holy wine,
Against this falsehood, garmented as truth,
Lift now the blade *There is not aught but God*
And smite ! The days are shrouded all in mirk;
Display thy light, and let *the thing in thee* ⁹²

Perfected shine o'er all humanity.

I tremble for thy shame, when on the Day
Of Reckoning that Glory of all time
Shall question thee : "Thou tookest from my lips
The word of Truth, and wherefore hast thou failed
To pass my message on to other men ?"

*That the Expansion of Communal Life Depends upon
Controlling the Forces of World Order*

Thou, who hast made with the Invisible
Thy covenant, and burst forth like a flood
From the shore's bondage, as a sapling rise
Out of this garden's soil ; attach thy heart
To the Unseen, yet ever with the seen
Wage conflict, since this being visible
Interprets that unviewed, and prelude is
To the o'ermastery of hidden powers.
All otherness is only to subdue,
Its breast a target for the well-winged shaft ;
God's fiat *Be !* made other manifest "a
So that thy arrows might be sharp to pierce
The steely anvil. Truly it requires
A tightly knotted cord, to whet and prove
The wit of the resolver. Art thou a bud ?
Interpret in thyself the flowery mead ;
Art thou a dewdrop ? Dominate the sun !
If thou art equal to the bold emprise,
Melt thou this snow-lion with one torrid breath !
Whoever hath subdued the things perceived
Can of one atom reconstruct a world,
And he whose shaft would pierce the angel's breast

First fastens Adam to his saddle-bow ;
He first resolves the knot phenomena
And, mastering Being, proves his lofty powers.
Mountain and wilderness, river and plain,
All land and sea—these are the scholar's slate
On which the man of vision learns to read.
O thou who slumberest, by dull opiates drugged,
And namest mean this world material,
Rise up, and open thy besotted eyes !
Call thou not mean thy world by Law compelled ;
Its purpose is to enlarge the Muslim's soul,
To challenge his potentialities ;
The body it assaults with fortune's sword
That thou mayest see if there be blood within ;
Dash thou thy breast against its jagged rock
Until it pierce thy flesh, and prove thy bone.
God counts this world the portion of good men,
Commits its splendour to believers' eyes ;
It is a road the caravan must pass,
A touchstone the believer's gold to assay ;
Seize thou this world, that it may not seize thee
And in its pitcher swallow thee like wine.

The stallion of thy thought is parrot-swift,
Striding the whole wide heavens in a bound ;
Urged ever onwards by the needs of life,
Raised up to rove the skies, though earthbound still ;
That, having won the mastery of the powers
Of this world-order, thou mayest consummate
The perfecting of thy ingenious crafts.
Man is the deputy of God on earth,
And o'er the elements his rule is fixed ;
On earth thy narrowness receiveth breadth,

Thy toil takes on fair shape. Ride thou the wind ;
Put bridle on that swift-paced dromedary.
Dabble thy fingers in the mountain's blood ;
Draw up the lustrous waters of the pearl
From ocean's bottom ; in this single field
A hundred worlds are hidden, countless suns
Veiled in these dancing motes. This glittering ray
Shall bring to vision the invisible,
Disclose uncomprehended mysteries.
Take splendour from the world-inflaming sun,
The arch-illuminating levin from the storm ;
All stars and planets dwelling in the sky,
Those lords to whom the ancient peoples prayed,
All those, my master, wait upon thy word
And are obedient servants to thy will.
In prudence plan the quest, to make it sure,
Then master every spirit, all the world.
Open thine eyes, and into all things gaze ;
Behold the rapture veiled within the wine.
The weak, endowed with knowledge of the power
Of natural things, takes tribute from the strong.
The outward form of Being is not bare
Of inward meaning ; this old instrument
Still keeps its pitch, still lightning in its song
If played with cunning, Self against the strings
For plectrum striking. Thou, whom God designed
Saying, *Behold!* why travellest thou this way⁹⁴
Like blind men ? Lo, thy self-enkindled drop
Being intimate with mysteries, is like wine
Within the tendril, dew upon the rose ;
Let flow into the ocean, it becomes
A pearl, its substance glittering as a star.

Fan not the rose's petals like the breeze,
 But plunge into the meaning of the bower ;
 Whoso hath spun about phenomena
 The knotted noose, hath mastered for his mount
 The lightning and the heat. He makes the word
 Wing like a bird in flight, the instrument
 Sing of itself without the plectrum's touch.
 Thy ass is lame, because the way of life
 Was arduous, and thou too ignorant
 Of life's hard combat ; while already now
 Thy fellow-travellers have reached the goal,
 Borne from her litter Laila, the divine
 And lovely Truth ; like Qais thou wanderest
 Distracted in the desert, weary, sore.
 Yet Adam's glory was that he possessed
 The *knowledge of the names*, and being wise ⁹⁵
 In natural ken, was thereby fortified.

*That the Perfection of Communal Life is Attained
 when the Community, like the Individual, Discovers
 the Sensation of Self ; and that the Propagation and
 Perfecting of this Sensation can be Realized through
 Guarding the Communal Traditions*

O thou of gaze intent, hast thou not seen
 An infant, unacquainted with its self,
 So unaware of what is far, what near
 That it aspires to rein the very moon ?
 To all a stranger, mother-worshipping,
 Drunken with weeping, and with milk, and sleep,
 His ear cannot distinguish *la* from *mi*,

His music's the mere jangling of a chain.
Simple and virgin are his thoughts as yet,
Pure as a pearl his speech ; to search and search
His meditation's sum, as on his lips
Spring ever Why and When and How and Where ;
Receptive to all images his mind,
His occupation other to pursue,
Other to see. Let any take his eyes
Creeping behind his back, and how distressed
His little soul becomes ! So immature
His thoughts are yet, that like the new-sprung hawk
Flutters its wings, to try the world's wide air ;
He lets them slip, to hunt and seize their prey,
Then calls them home again unto himself.
Lit by the pyrotechnics of the mind
The rocket of his fancy fills the sky
With coruscating embers. At the last
His eye prehensile lights upon himself ;
His little hand clutched to his breast, he cries
" I ! " So his memory maketh him aware
Of his own Self, and keeps secure the bond
Linking to-morrow with his yesterday ;
Upon this golden thread his days are strung
Like jewels on a necklace, one by one.
Though, every breath, ever diminishes,
Ever augments his flesh, " I am the same
As I have ever been," his heart declares.
This newborn " I " the inception is of life,
This the true song of life's awaking lute.

Like to a child is a Community
Newborn, an infant in its mother's arms ;
All unaware of Self ; a jewel stained

By the road's dust ; unbound to its to-day
Is its to-morrow, fettered not its feet
By the successive links of night and day.
It is the pupil lodged in Being's eye,
Other beholding, lost unto itself ;
A hundred knots are in its cord to loose
Ere it can reach the end of Selfhood's thread.
But when with energy it falls upon
The world's great labours, stable then becomes
This new-won consciousness ; it raises up
A thousand images, and casts them down ;
So it createth its own history.
Yet, when the Individual has snapped
The bond that joins his days, as when a comb
Sheddeth its teeth, so his perception is.
The record of the past illuminates
The conscience of a People ; memory
Of past achievements makes it self-aware ;
But if that memory fades, and is forgot,
The folk again is lost in nothingness.
Know, then, 'tis the connecting thread of days
That stitches up thy life's loose manuscript ;
This selfsame thread sews us a shirt to wear,
Its needle the remembrance of old yarns.
What thing is history, O self-unaware ?
A fable ? Or a legendary tale ?
Nay, 'tis the thing that maketh thee aware
Of thy true self, alert unto the task,
A seasoned traveller ; this is the source
Of the soul's ardour, this the nerves that knit
The body of the whole Community.
This whets thee like a dagger on its sheath,

To dash thee in the face of all the world.
Ah, how delightful is this instrument
And how inspiring, that within its strings
Imprisons those departed memories !
See the extinguished splendour blaze anew !
Behold all yesterdays in the embrace
Of its to-day ! Its candle is a star
To light the peoples' fortunes, and illumine
To-night and yesternight in equal shine.
The skilful vision that beholds the past
Can recreate before thy wondering gaze
The past anew ; wine of a hundred years
That bowl contains, an ancient drunkenness
Flames in its juice ; a cunning fowler it
To snare the bird that from our garden flew.
Preserve this history, and so abide
Unshaken, vital with departed breaths ;
Fix in firm bond to-day with yesterday ;
Make life a bird accustomed to the hand.
Draw to thy hand the thread of all the days,
Else thou art blind-by-day, night-worshipping.
Thy present thrusts its head up from the past,
And from thy present shall thy future stem.
If thou desirest everlasting life,
Break not the thread between the past and now
And the far future. What is Life ? A wave
Of consciousness of continuity,
A gurgling wine that flames the revellers.

*That the Continuance of the Species Derives from
Motherhood ; and that the Preservation and Honouring
of Motherhood is the Foundation of Islam*

The instrument of Man sings melodies
When struck by Woman's plectrum ; his soul's pride
Swells of her deference. *The Woman clothes* ⁸⁶
The nakedness of Man ; the loveliness
Of the beloved a garment weaves for love,
The love of God is nourished at her breast,
A lovely air struck from her silent hand ;
And he in whom all beings make their boast
Declared he loved three things—*sweet perfume, prayer,*
And womankind. What Muslim reckons her
A servant, nothing more, no part has won
Of the Book's wisdom. If thou lookest well,
Motherhood is a mercy, being linked
By close affinity to Prophethood,
And her compassion is the Prophet's own.
For mothers shape the way that men shall go ;
Maturer, by the grace of Motherhood,
The character of nations is ; the lines
That score that brow determine our estate.
If thou art learnèd to attain the truth
Behind the form, our word Community
Hath, in the Persian, many subtleties.
He, for whose sake God said *Let there be life,* ⁸⁷
Declared that *Paradise lies at the feet* ⁸⁸
Of mothers. In the honouring of the womb
The life communal is alone secured,
Else is life raw and brutish. Motherhood

Quickens the pace of life, the mysteries
Of life revealing ; tortuously twists
The current of our stream, so that it flows
Bubbling and whirling on its rapid course.
Take any peasant woman, ignorant,
Squat-figured, fat, uncomely, unrefined,
Unlettered, dim of vision, simple, dumb ;
The pangs of motherhood have torn her heart,
Dark, tragic rings have underscored her eyes ;
If from her bosom the Community
Receive one Muslim zealous for the Faith,
God's faithful servant, all the pains she bore
Have fortified our being, and our dawn
Glowes radiant in the lustre of her dusk.
Now take the slender figure, bosomless,
Close-cosseted, a riot in her glance,
Her thoughts resplendent with the Western light ;
In outward guise a woman, inwardly
No woman she ; she hath destroyed the bonds
That hold our pure Community secure ;
Her sacred charms are all unloosed and spilled ;
Bold-eyed her freedom is, provocative,
And wholly ignorant of modesty ;
Her learning is inadequate to bear
The charge of motherhood, and on the dusk
And evening of her days not one star shines ;
Better it were this rose had never grown
Within our garden, better were her brand
Washed from the skirt of the Community.

Stars without number whispering *No god*
But God, ungleaming in the dark of time
And not yet risen from nonentity,

Still wait without the bounded territories
Of quality and quantity, being hid
Within the shadows of our patent life,
These our epiphanies still unbeheld ;
Dew not descended on the rose's bloom,
Buds not yet torn by the lascivious breeze.
This garden of potentialities,
These unseen tulips blossom from the bower
Of fertile Motherhood. A people's wealth
Rests not, my prudent friend, in linen fine
Or treasured hoards of silver and of gold ;
Its riches are its sons, clean-limbed and strong
Of body, supple-brained, hard-labouring,
Healthy and nimble to high enterprise.
Mothers preserve the clue of Brotherhood,
The strength of Scripture and Community.

*That the Lady Fatima is the Perfect Pattern
of Muslim Womanhood*

Mary is hallowed in one line alone,
That she bore Jesus ; Fatima in three.⁹⁹
For that she was the sweet delight of him
Who came a mercy to all living things,
Leader of former as of latter saints,
Who breathed new spirit into this dead world
And brought to birth the age of a New Law.
His lady she, whose regal diadem
God's words adorn *Hath there come any time*,¹⁰⁰
The chosen one, resolver of all knots
And hard perplexities, the Lion of God,
An emperor whose palace was a hut,

Accoutred with one sword, one coat of mail.
And she his mother, upon whom revolves
Love's compasses, the leader of Love's train,
That single candle in the corridor
Of sanctity resplendent, guardian
Of the integrity of that best race
Of all God's peoples ; who, that the fierce flame
Of war and hatred might extinguished be,
Trod underfoot the crown and royal ring.
His mother too, the lord of all earth's saints
And strong right arm of every freeborn man,
Husain, the passion in the song of life,
Teacher of freedom to God's chosen few.
The character, the essential purity
Of holy children from their mothers come.
She was the harvest of the well-sown field
Of self-surrender, to all mothers she
The perfect pattern, Fatima the chaste.
Her heart so grieved, because one came in need,
She stripped her cloak and sold it to a Jew ;
Though creatures all, of light alike and fire,
Obeyed her bidding, yet she sank her will
In her good consort's pleasure. Fortitude
And meekness were her schooling ; while her lips
Chanted the Book, she ground the homely mill.
No pillow needed she to catch her tears,
But wept contrition's offering of pearls
Upon the skirt of prayer ; which Gabriel stooped
To gather, as they glistened in the dust,
And rained like dew upon the Throne of God.
God's Law a fetter locks about my feet
To guard secure the Prophet's high behest,

Else had I surely gone about her tomb
And fallen prostrate, worshipping her dust.

Address to the Veiled Ladies of Islam

O thou, whose mantle is the covering
That guards our honour, whose effulgency
Our candle's capital, whose nature pure
To us a mercy, our religion's strength,
Foundation of our true Community!
Our children's lips, being suckled at thy breast,
From thee first learn to lisp *No god but God*.
Thy love it is, that shapes our little ways,
Thy love that moulds our thoughts, our words, our deeds.
Our lightning-flash, that slumbered in thy cloud,
Glitters upon the mountain, sweeps the plain.
O guardian of the blessings of God's Law,
Thou from whose breath the Faith of God draws fire,
Coxcomb and crafty is the present age,
Its caravan a highwayman, well armed
To seize and spoil Faith's riches; blind its brain,
That knoweth naught of God; ignoble they
Who are the captives of its twisted chains;
Bold is its eye, and reckless; swift to snatch
The talons of its lashes; its poor prey
Calls itself free, its victim vaunts it lives!
Thine is the hand that, keepeth fresh and green
The young tree of our Commonwealth, as thou
Guardest inviolate the capital
Of our Community. Fret not thyself
To calculate the profit and the loss,
Being content to tread the well-worn path

Our fathers went before. Be wary of
Time's depredations, and to thy broad breast
Gather thy children close ; these meadow-chicks,
Unfledged as yet to fly, have fallen far
From their warm nest. High, high the cravings are
That wrestle with thy soul ; be conscious still
And ever of thy model, Fatima,
So that thy branch may bear a new Husain,
Our garden blossom with the Golden Age.

SUMMARY OF THE PURPORT OF THE POEM

In Exegesis of the Sura of Pure Faith :
" Say : He is God, One "

I DREAMED one night I looked upon Siddiq ¹⁰¹
And plucked a rose that blossomed at his feet—
He, that *most generous was of all mankind* ¹⁰²
Unto our Master, he that stood the first
Like Moses on the Sinai of our Faith,
Whose zeal was as a cloud that showered rain
Upon the tilth of our Community,
Second to own Islam, to share the Cave, ¹⁰³
Badr, and the Tomb. " O chosen of Love's choice,"
I cried to him, " whose love is the first line
In the collected poetry of Love,
Whose hand established on a firmer base
The fabric of our fortunes ; now prescribe
A remedy for our immediate woes."
" How long ", said he, " wilt thou be prisoner
To base desire ? Get lustre, and new light
To light thee, from the Sura of Pure Faith."
This one breath, winding in a hundred breasts,
Is but one secret of the Unity ;
Get thee its colour, to be like to it,
Reflective to its beauty in the world.
He, who bestowed this Muslim name on thee,
Drew thee to Oneness from Duality ;
'Tis thou thyself hast called thee Afghan, Turk—

Ah, thou remainest as thou ever wert !
Deliver now the named from all the names ;
Have done with cups ; ally thee to the jar !
Thou hast become a scandal to thy name,
A leaf that fell untimely from thy tree ;
Attune thee unto Oneness ; be thou gone
From Twoness ; nor dissect thy Unity.
Thou who art servant unto One, if thou
Art thou, how long wilt thou to school of Two ?
Lo, thou hast shut thy door upon thyself ;
Take to thy heart that which thy lips imbibed.
A hundred nations thou hast raised from one,
On thy own fort made treacherous assault.
Be one ; make visible thy Unity ;
Let action turn the unseen into seen ;
Activity augments the joy of faith,
But faith is dead that issues not in deeds.

“ God, the Self-Subsistent ”

If thou hast bound thy faithful heart on *God*
The Self-Subsistent, thou hast overlept
The rim of things material. No slave
To things material God's servant is ;
Life is no turning of a water-wheel.
If thou be Muslim, be not suppliant
Of other's succour ; be the embodiment
Of good to all the world. Make not complaint
Of scurvy fortune to the fortunate,
Nor from thy sleeve reach out a beggar's hand.
Like Ali, be content with barley-bread ;

Break Marhab's neck, and capture Khaibar's fort.¹⁰⁴
 Why bear the favour of the bountiful,
 Why feel the lancet of their nay and yea?
 Take not thy sustenance from mean, base hands;
 Thou art a Joseph; count thyself not cheap.¹⁰⁵
 And if thou be an ant, and lackest wings
 And feathers, go not unto Solomon
 To plead thy want. The road is arduous;
 Go light-accoutred, if thou wouldst attain;
 Unfettered live thy days, unfettered die.
 Count o'er the rosary of *Take thou less*¹⁰⁶
Of this world's goods, and thou shalt riches win
 In *living free*. So far as in thee lies
 Become that Stone of the philosophers,
 Not the base dross; a benefactor be,
 Not a petitioner for others' alms.
 Thou knowest well Bu Ali's eminence;¹⁰⁷
 Accept from me this draught, drawn from his cup—
 “Trample Kai-Kaus' throne beneath thy foot;
 Yield up thy life, but not thy self-respect!”
 The tavern door stands open of itself
 To those whose bowls are empty, whose needs none.
 Harun Rashid, that captain of the Faith¹⁰⁸
 Whose blade to Nicephor of Byzance proved
 A deadly potion, unto Malik spoke
 Upon this fashion: “Master of my folk,¹⁰⁹
 The dust before whose door illuminates
 My people's brow, melodious nightingale
 Carolling mid the roses of good words,
 I am desirous to be taught by thee
 The secrets of those words. How long art thou
 Content in Yemen to conceal the glow

Of thy bright rubies? Rise, and pitch thy tent ¹¹⁰
Here, in the homestead of the Caliphate.
How fair the brightness of the shining day,
The captivating beauty of Iraq!
The Fount of Khizer gushes from its vines,¹¹¹
Its earth is healing for the wounds of Christ."
"I am the Prophet's servant," Malik said,
"And only him I love, with all my heart.
Bound to his saddle-bow, I will not quit
His holy sanctuary. By the kiss
Of Yathrib's dust I live; my night to me ¹¹²
Is fairer than Iraq's pellucid day.
Love says, 'Obey my ordinance; sign not
The articles of service even to kings.'
Thou wouldst become my master, overlord
Of this freed slave of God, that I should wait
Upon thy door to teach thee, and no more
Serve the Community, being bound to thee.
Be it thy wish some portion to attain
Of godly knowledge, in my circle sit
And study with the rest. Indifference
To worldly needs engenders fine disdain,
And holy pride takes many splendid shapes."
Godly indifference is to put on
The hue of God, and from thy robe to wash
The dye of otherness. But thou hast learned
The rote of others, taking that for store,
An alien rouge to beautify thy face;
In those insignia thou takest pride,
Until I know not if thou be thyself
Or art another. Fanned by foreign blasts
Thy soil is fallen silent, and no more

Fertile in fragrant roses and sweet herbs.
Desolate not thy tilth with thy own hand ;
Make it not beg for rain from alien clouds.
Thy mind is prisoner to others' thoughts,
Another's music throbs within thy throat,
Thy very speech is borrowed, and thy heart
Dilates with aspirations not thine own.
The song thy ring-doves sing, the leafy gowns
That deck thy cypresses, are meanly begged ;
Thou takest wine from others in a bowl
Itself from others taken upon loan.

If he, whose glance contains the mystery
Erred not the sight—if he should come again ¹¹³
Unto his people, he whose candle-flame
Knows its own moth, who can distinguish well
His own from strangers standing at the gate,
Our Master would declare, *Thou art not mine*.
Woe, woe, alas for us upon that day !

How long wilt thou content thyself to live
The life of stars, that in the risen morn
Lose all their being ? Thou hast been deceived
By the false dawn, packed up thy goods and gone
From the broad firmament. Thou art the sun ;
Look on thyself a little ; purchase not
Some shreds of radiance from others' stars !
Thou hast engraved thy heart with alien shapes,
Gambled the alchemy and gained the dross ;
How long this glittering with others' shine ?
Shake off the heavy fumes of foreign grapes !
How long this fluttering about the flame
Of party lanterns ? If thou hast a heart
Within thy breast, with thine own ardour burn !

Be like the gaze, wrapped round in thy own veils ;
 Rise on the wing, but ever wheel back home ;
 Bubble-like bar thy little privacy
 Against the intruder, if thou wouldst be wise.
 No man to Individuality
 Ever attained, save that he knew himself,
 No nation came to nationhood, except
 It spurned to suit the whim of other men.
 Then of our Prophet's message be apprised,
 And have thou done with other lords but God.

" He Begat Not, Neither Was He Begotten "

Loftier than hue and blood thy people are,
 And greater worth one negro of the Faith
 Than are a hundred redskin infidels.
 A single drop of water Qanbar took
 For his ablutions is more precious far
 Than all the blood of Caesar. Take no count
 Of father, mother, uncle ; call thyself
 An offspring of Islam, as Salman did.¹¹⁴
 See, my brave comrade, in the honeyed cells
 That constitute the hive a subtle truth ;
 One drop from a red tulip is distilled,
 One from a blue narcissus ; none proclaims,
 " I am of jessamine, of lily I ! "
 So our Community the beehive is
 Of Abraham, whose honey is our Faith.
 If thou hast made of our Community
 Lineage a part essential, thou hast rent
 The fabric of true Brotherhood ; thy roots

Have struck not in our soil, thy way of thought
Runs counter to our Muslim rectitude.

Ibn-i Mas'ud, that lantern bright of Love,¹¹⁶
Body and spirit blazing in Love's flame,
Being distressed upon a brother's death
Dissolved in tears, a mirror liquefied,
Nor any term to his lamentings saw
But in his grief; as of her child bereaved
A mother weeps, so uncontrollably
He sobbed: "Ah, scholar of humility,
Alas, my comrade in the school of prayer!
My tall young cypress, fellow-traveller
Upon the pathway of the Prophet's love!
O grief, that he is now denied the courts
Of God's Apostle, while mine eyes are bright
With gazing fondly on the Prophet's face!"

The bond of Turk and Arab is not ours,
The link that binds us is no fetter's chain
Of ancient lineage; our hearts are bound
To the beloved Prophet of Hejaz,
And to each other are we joined through him.
Our common thread is simple loyalty
To him alone; the rapture of his wine
Alone our eyes entrances; from what time
This glad intoxication with his love
Raced in our blood, the old is set ablaze
In new creation. As the blood that flows
Within a people's veins, so is his love
Sole substance of our solidarity.
Love dwells within the spirit, lineage
The flesh inhabits; stronger far than race
And common ancestry is Love's firm cord.

True loverhood must overleap the bounds
 Of lineage, transcend Arabia
 And Persia. Love's Community is like
 The light of God ; whatever being we
 Possess, from its existence is derived.
 "None seeketh when or where God's light was born ;"¹¹⁶
 What need of warp and woof, God's robe to spin ?
 Who suffereth his foot to wear the chains
 Of clime and ancestry, is unaware
 How *He begat not, neither was begot.*

"And There Is Not Any Equal Unto Him"

What is the Muslim, that hath closed his eyes
 Against the world ? This heart attached to God,
 What is its nature ? On a mountain-top
 A tulip blowing, that hath never seen
 The trailing border of the gatherer's skirt ;
 The flame is kindled in his ardent breast
 From the first breaths of dawn ; heaven suffers not
 To loose him from her bosom, deeming him
 A star suspended ; the uprising sun
 Touches his lips with dawn's first ray, the dew
 Bathes from his waking eyes the dust of sleep.

Firm must the bond be tied with *There is none*
 If thou wouldst an unequalled people be.
 He who is Essence One, unpartnered is ;
 His servant too no partner can endure ;
 And whoso in the Highest of the High
 Believeth, cannot suffer any peer
 In his high jealousy. Wrapt round his breast

The robe of *Do not grieve*, borne on his brow¹¹⁷
 The crown *Ye are the highest*, he transports
 On his broad back the burden of both worlds,
 Protects both land and sea in his embrace ;
 His ear attentive to the thunder's roar,
 His shoulders bared to take the lightning's scourge,
 Against the false he is a sword, a shield
 Before the truth ; evil and good are proved
 Upon the touchstone of his ordinance
 And prohibition. Knotted in his coils
 A hundred conflagrations lurk ; Life's self
 Derives perfection from his essence pure.
 Through the broad spaces of this clamorous world
 No music sounds but his triumphant song,
 His loud *Allahu Akbar*. Great is he
 In justice, clemency, benevolence ;
 Noble his temper, even in chastisement.
 At festival his lyre delights the mind ;
 Steel melts before his ardour in the fight.
 Where roses blossom, with the nightingale's
 His sweet song mingles ; in the wilderness
 No falcon is more swift upon the prey.
 His heart untroubled scorns to take repose
 Beneath the heavens ; in the spreading skies
 He makes his dwelling, as on soaring wing
 He rises far beyond yon ancient hoop
 That spans our firmament, to whet his beak
 Against the gleaming stars. Thou, with thy frail
 Unspread of pinion, tentative to fly,
 Art like some chrysalis, that in the dust
 Still slumbers on ; rejecting the Koran,
 How meanly thou hast sunk, base caviller

Protesting of the turn of Fortune's wheel !
Yet, lying abject as the scattered dew,
Thou hast within thy grip a living Book ;
How long shall earth content thee for thy home ?
Lift up thy baggage ; hurl it to the skies !

THE AUTHOR'S MEMORIAL TO
HIM WHO IS A MERCY TO ALL
LIVING BEINGS

O THOU, whose manifesting was the youth
Of strenuous life, whose bright epiphany
Told the interpretation of life's dreams,
Earth attained honour, having held thy court,
And heaven glory, having kissed thy roof.
Thy face illumines the six-directioned world ;
Turk, Tajik, Arab—all thy servants are.
Whatever things have being, find in thee
True exaltation, and thy poverty
Is their abundant riches. In this world
Thou list the lamp of life, as thou didst teach
God's servitors a godly mastery.
Without thee, whatsoever form indwelt
This habitat of water and of clay
Was put to shame in utter bankruptcy ;
Till, when thy breath drew fire from the cold dust
And Adam made of earth's dead particles,
Each atom caught the skirts of sun and moon,
Suddenly conscious of its inward strength.
Since first my gaze alighted on thy face
Dearer than father and dear mother thou
Art grown to me. Thy love hath lit a flame
Within my heart ; ah, let it work at ease,
For all my spirit is consumed in me,
And my sole chattel is a reed-like sigh,
The lantern flickering in my ruined house.

It is not possible not to declare
This hidden grief ; it is not possible
To veil the wine in the translucent cup.
But now the Muslim is estranged anew
Unto the Prophet's secret ; now once more
God's sanctuary is an idols' shrine ;
Manat and Lat, Hubal and Uzza—each ¹¹⁸
Carries an idol to his bosom clasped ;
Our Shaikh—no Brahman is so infidel,
Seeing his Somnath stands within his head. ¹¹⁹
Arabia deserted, he is gone
With all his being's baggage, slumberous
To drowse in Persia's wine-vault. Persia's sleet
Has set his limbs a-shiver ; his thin wine
Runs colder than his tears. As timorous
Of death as any infidel, his breast
Is hollow, empty of a living heart.
I bore him lifeless from the doctors' hands
And brought him to the Prophet's presence ; dead
He was ; I told him of the Fount of Life,
I spoke with him upon a mystery
Of the Koran, a tale of the Beloved ¹²⁰
Of Nejd ; I brought to him a perfume sweet
Pressed from the roses of Arabia.
The candle of my music lit the throng ;
I taught the people life's enigma ; still
He cried against me, " These are Europe's spells
He weaves to bind us with, the psaltery
Of Europe that he strikes into our ears."
O thou, that to Busiri gavest a Cloak ¹²¹
And to my fingers yielded Salma's lute, ¹²²
Grant now to him, whose thoughts are so astray

That he can no more recognize his own,
Perception of the truth, and joy therein.
Be lustreless the mirror of my heart,
Or be my words by aught but the Koran
Informed, O thou whose splendour is the dawn
Of every age and time, whose vision sees
All that is in men's breasts, rend now the veil ¹²³
Of my thought's shame ; sweep clean the avenue
Of my offending thorns ; choke in my breast
The narrow breath of life ; thy people guard
Against the mischief of my wickedness ;
Nurse not to verdure my untimely seed,
Grant me no portion of Spring's fecund showers,
Wither the vintage in my swelling grapes
And scatter poison in my sparkling wine ;
Disgrace me on the Day of Reckoning,
Too abject to embrace thy holy feet.
But if I ever threaded on my chain
The pearl of the Koran's sweet mysteries,
If to the Muslims I have spoken true,
O thou whose bounty raises the obscure
Unto significance, one prayer from thee
Is ample guerdon for my words' desert ;
Plead thou to God my cause, and let my love
Be locked in the embrace of godly deeds.
Thou hast accorded me a contrite soul,
A part of holy learning ; stablish me
More firm in action, and my April shower
Convert to pearls of great and glittering price.

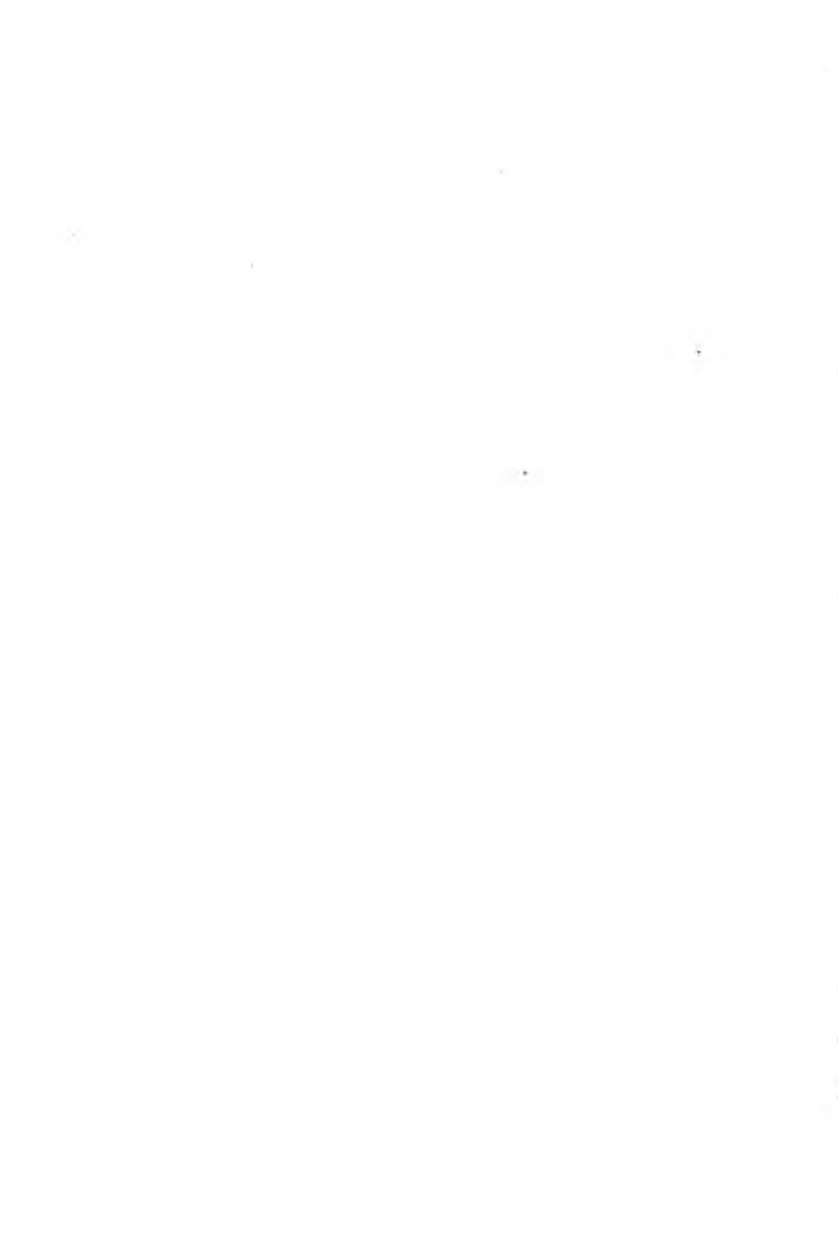
Since first I cast the baggage of my soul
In this world's caravanserai, one more
Desire I ever nourished, like my heart

Dwelling within my breast, mine intimate
From life's first dawn ; since first I learned thy name
From my sire's lips, the flame of that desire
Kindled and glowed in me. My roll of days
As heaven lengthens, in life's lottery
Marking me loser, ever lustier grows
The youth of my desire ; this ancient wine
Gains greater body with the passing years.
This yearning is a gem beneath my dust,
A single star illumining my night.
Awhile with rosy cheeks did I consort,
Played love with twisted tresses, tasted wines
With lustrous brows, the lamp of godly peace
Rudely extinguished ; lightnings danced about
My harvest ; my heart's store of merchandise
By highwaymen was plundered. Yet this draught
Was spilled not from the goblet of my soul,
This gold refined not scattered from my skirt.
My reason diabolical resolved
To wear the Magian girdle ; its impress
Stamped o'er my spirit's furrows. Many years
I was doubt's prisoner, inseparable
From my too arid brain. I had not read
One letter of true knowledge, and abode
Still in philosophy's conjecture-land ;
My darkness was a stranger to the light
Of God, my dusk knew not the glow of dawn.
And yet this yearning slumbered in my heart,
Close-shrouded as the pearl within the shell ;
But lastly from the goblet of mine eye
It slowly trickled, and within my mind
Created melodies. And now my soul

Is emptied of all memories but thee ;
I will be bold to speak of my desire,
If thou wilt give me leave. My life hath been
Unfurnished in good works, and therefore I
Might not aspire to worthiness of this,
Which to reveal I am too much ashamed ;
Yet thy compassion maketh me more bold.
The honey of thy mercy comforteth
The whole round world ; and this my yearning is,
That I be granted in Hejaz to die !
A Muslim, stranger to all else but God—
How long shall he the heathen girdle wear
And keep the temple ? O the bitter shame
If, when his earthly days are at an end,
A pagan shrine receives his mortal bones.
If from thy door my scattered parts arise,
Woe to this day, that morrow how sublime !
O happy city that thy dwelling was,
Thrice-blessed earth wherein thou dost repose !
“ My friend’s abode, the city of my king—
True patriotism this, the lover’s creed.”
Give to my star an ever-wakeful eye,
And in the shadow of the wall a place
To slumber, that my restless heart at last
May find repose, my spirit’s quicksilver
Be stilled ; that I may say unto the skies,
“ Behold me, tranquil ; ye who looked upon
My first beginning, witness now my close.”



NOTES



NOTES

1. Muhammad being commonly called the Seal of the Prophets because in him God concluded His series of revelations to mankind, Iqbal borrows the term and refers to the Islamic Community as the Seal of the Peoples.

2. The reference is to the continuing fashion among Urdu poets to imitate the conventional love-lyrics of Persia in which the images mentioned are very common. Persia is here taken, as elsewhere in the poem, to serve as a symbol for the departure from strict orthodoxy and the acceptance of alien influences which Iqbal considered to be the chief causes of Islam's degeneration.

3. Alexander the Great is said in Persian legend to have possessed a magic mirror in which he saw the whole world at a glance.

4. Friday is of course the Muslim Sabbath.

5. The "best of mortals" is Muhammad, Iqbal here paraphrases a saying attributed to him.

6. A verse, in Persian poetic theory, is supposed to be self-contained, and it is taken for a blemish when the meaning of a verse is completed by a word or phrase in a preceding or succeeding verse.

7. The original for "sacred well" is Zemzem, the well of Mecca at which the Muslim pilgrims drink.

8. The musk of the musk-deer, much prized by the Persians, can only be gathered when the deer is captured alive.

9. This and the following verse form a quotation from the great mystical poet Rumi (d. 1273).

10. The reference is to the story in the Koran that when Moses stood on Sinai he prayed that he might see God. God replied that he should not see Him, but that he should look upon the mountain, and if it stood firm in its place then he would see God. God thereupon revealed Himself to the mountain, and it crumbled into dust. See Koran vii. 139.

11. The quotation is from Koran xix. 94.

12. The ancient Persian king Jamshid is said to have owned a bowl possessing the same world-revealing attributes as Alexander's mirror.

13. The quotation is the opening phrase of the Muslim affirmation of faith.

14. Omar was the second caliph of Islam, and Abu Dharr a Companion of Muhammad highly honoured for his piety.

15. Islam claimed to be the pure religion revealed to Abraham, Judaism being a corruption of the original faith. The quotation is from Koran xxii. 77.

16. The quotation is from Koran xxxix. 54.

17. Alond (Alvand-Koh) is a mountain-chain to the west and south-west of Hamadan.

18. Collyrium is usually considered to be a specific for improving the sight.

19. The quotation is from Koran ix. 40.

20. Abu Bakr was the first caliph of Islam.

21. The quotation is from Koran ii. 36.

22. The quotation is from Koran xx. 71.

23. Ali, the fourth caliph of Islam, was Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law. His famous sword was called Dhu 'l-Faqar.

24. Khalid was the greatest of the generals of early Islam, and was called "the Sword of God" by the Prophet.

25. Iqbal recounts one of the most famous anecdotes related of the Moghul emperor Aurangzebe (1618-1707). Timur (Tamerlane) was the ancestor of the Moghul emperors.

26. The reference is to the "Divine Religion", a syncretism invented and promulgated by the Moghul Akbar (1542-1605).

27. Dara Shikoh (1615-59), great-grandson of Akbar, was interested by the idea of working out a harmony between Islam and Hinduism. His younger brother Aurangzebe wrested the throne from him, and had him put to death.

28. Abraham is said to have overthrown the idols standing in the Holy House at Mecca. See Koran xxii. 27.

29. The reference is to Koran vi. 76, where Abraham is said to have rejected the worship of the heavenly bodies because he observed that they were liable to set.

30. The reference is to Koran ii. 122.

31. The reference is to Koran ii. 119.

32. The reference is to Koran xiv. 40.

33. The reference is to Koran ii. 122.

34. The reference is to Koran xxii. 16.

35. Iqbal here paraphrases a verse occurring in the *Qasidat al-Burda*,

a celebrated panegyric of the Prophet by the Egyptian poet Busiri (d. 1296).

36. The reference is to a saying recorded of Muhammad.

37. The Persian (Sassanian) emperors were called Chosroes.

38. Magian is another term for the fire-worshipping Zoroastrian.

39. Khaqan was a title borne by the kings of Tartary.

40. Farhad, a celebrated architect, fell in love with the beautiful Shirin, but his rival was Khusrav Parviz, Emperor of Persia. Farhad hewed his way through a mountain to reach her, but fell to his death on being falsely told that she was dead. Several Persian epics were written on this theme.

41. The reference is to Koran xlix. 13.

42. The reference is to Koran xlix. 10.

43. The reference is to Koran vii. 171.

44. Yazdajird was the last Sassanian king of Persia.

45. Kaveh, a smith of Ispahan, raised the standard of revolt against the usurping tyrant Zahhak and established Feridun on the throne of Persia.

46. Sasan was the eponymous founder of the Sassanian dynasty, overthrown at the Arab conquest of Persia.

47. Qanbar, formerly a slave, was manumitted by the caliph Ali. Bilal, formerly an Abyssinian slave, was taken by the Prophet as his muezzin.

48. The reference is to Koran ii. 175.

49. The reference is to Koran xvi. 92.

50. There is a reference here to Koran xxxvii. 18.

51. Ali's son Husain was slain at Kerbela in 680; his head was sent to the caliph Yazid against whom he had revolted.

52. The reference is to Koran xxxvii. 107.

53. The reference is to a saying recorded of the Prophet.

54. The reference is to Koran cxii. 1.

55. Shabbir was the pet name given by the Prophet to his grandson Husain.

56. Iqbal quotes from the mystic Mu'in al-Din Chishti (d. 1236) as the source of this and the following line.

57. *Allahu Akbar* ("God is Greater") is a phrase from the Muslim Call to Prayer.

58. Kaab, a noted poet of Muhammad's time, after first refusing to accept Islam later became a convert, and composed his celebrated panegyric *Banat Su'ad* in honour of the Prophet.

59. This paraphrases a celebrated saying of the Prophet.

60. Another saying of the Prophet is here paraphrased. Muhammad claimed that he was a prophet "while Adam was still between water and clay".

61. The reference is to Koran v. 17.

62. Iqbal refers to the "flight" of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in 622.

63. The reference is to Koran xiv. 33-4.

64. Iqbal has in mind Machiavelli.

65. Azar, the father of Abraham, was an idolater. See Koran vi. 74.

66. The reference is to Koran vii. 32.

67. The reference is to Koran xv. 9.

68. The reference is to Koran ix. 32.

69. This and the following verses recall the Koranic story that Nimrod cast Abraham into a furnace, which miraculously converted into a rose-bower. See Koran xxi. 68-9.

70. The references are to Koran ii. 1, and Koran x. 65.

71. The reference is to Koran xxi. 107.

72. The reference is to Koran xxxiii. 72.

73. The reference is to Koran xxiii. 55.

74. The reference is to Koran liv. 6.

75. The Persian mystical poet Iraqi died in 1289.

76. Khatib and Dailami are the names of "Traditionists", transmitters of the reputed sayings of Muhammad.

77. In this and the following verse Iqbal refers to categories of Traditions rejected by strict Muslim critics.

78. Jaafar, called al-Sadiq ("the Trustworthy"), was a celebrated Traditionist; he died in 765.

79. Razi, a famous polymath, is remembered in particular for a massive commentary on the Koran; he died in 1209.

80. The reference is to Koran iii. 98.

81. Iqbal refers to the two miraculous signs of Moses mentioned in Koran xx. 20-3.

82. Batha is the name of the river-bed of Mecca.

83. The reference is to Shaikh Ahmad Rifa'i, a famous mystic, saint and preacher, who died in 1182.

84. Laila was the beloved of the mad poet Majnun (Qais).

85. Iqbal quotes from Rumi.

86. See note 84.
87. Iqbal quotes from the Persian poet Malik-i Qummi.
88. The reference is to Koran ii. 137.
89. Muhammad is said to have been unable to read or write. The reference is to Koran liii. 3.
90. The reference is to Koran liii. 2.
91. See note 65.
92. The reference is to Koran v. 5.
93. The reference is to God's creative word "Be !" as in Koran ii. 111, etc.
94. The reference is to Koran vii. 139.
95. The reference is to Koran ii. 29.
96. The reference is to Koran ii. 183.
97. See note 93.
98. The reference is to a celebrated saying of the Prophet.
99. Fatima was the daughter of Muhammad, the wife of Ali, and the mother of Hasan and Husain.
100. The reference is to Koran lxxvi. 1.
101. In this and the following sections Iqbal gives a commentary on Sura cxii. Siddiq was a title of Abu Bakr, the first caliph.
102. The reference is to a saying of the Prophet regarding Abu Bakr.
103. Muhammad sheltered with Abu Bakr in a cave during the "flight" from Mecca to Medina.
104. Khaibar was a Jewish stronghold in Arabia, captured in 628 in a campaign in which Ali distinguished himself. Marhab was a doughty Jewish warrior slain on this occasion.
105. The reference is to the selling of Joseph by his brothers "at a cheap price", see Koran xii. 20.
106. The quotation is a saying attributed to Omar, the second caliph.
107. Bu Ali Qalandar was a Persian mystical poet, popular in India; he died in 1324.
108. Nicephorus I of Byzantium (reigned 802-11) was defeated by Harun Rashid in a celebrated campaign.
109. Malik (d. 795) was the founder of the Maliki school of Muslim jurisprudence. The story of his refusal to accept Harun's invitation to Baghdad is famous.
110. The rubies of Yemen were proverbially splendid.
111. The Fount of Khizer was the legendary Fountain of Life which

Alexander the Great (Dhu 'l-Qarnain) is stated to have found under the guidance of his vizier Khizer.

112. Yathrib was the ancient name of Medina, where Malik lived.

113. The reference is to Koran liii. 17.

114. Salman al-Farisi ("the Persian") was a famous Companion of the Prophet.

115. Ibn-i Mas'ud was a Companion of the Prophet and a celebrated Traditionist.

116. Iqbal quotes from Ruini.

117. The reference is to Koran iii. 133.

118. These are the names of idols worshipped by the pagan Arabs.

119. Somnath was the site of a famous Hindu shrine, destroyed by Mahmud of Ghazna during his invasion of India in 1026.

120. The Beloved of Nejd is the Prophet Muhammad.

121. See note 35. The Cloak is a reference to the legend that Busiri was cured of paralysis by a vision of the Prophet throwing his mantle over him. This was the occasion of his composing the *Qasidat al-Burda* ("Ode of the Cloak").

122. Salma was a famous singing-girl.

123. The quoted phrase occurs frequently in the Koran.







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